

MassDOT - Highway Division

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

JANUARY 21, 2010

AT

AMESBURY TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

AMESBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

6:00 P.M.

FOR THE PROPOSED

WHITTIER BRIDGE/I-95 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
IN AMESBURY, SALISBURY AND NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS
Project No. 601096

Michael O'Dowd, Project Manager,
MassDOT - Highway Division, Accelerated Bridge
Program
Michael Sheehan, Right of Way Bureau,
MassDOT - Highway Division
Joe Freeman, Environmental Engineer,
Tetra Tech Rizzo
Michael Bertoulin, VP, Principal Project Manager,
Parsons Brinckerhoff

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(339) 674-9100

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1 forward in any comments that you have regarding the
2 project or tonight's meeting. And they would be
3 forwarded in -- I would ask either hand them to me or
4 hand them to Stephanie or Kate before you leave this
5 evening or I would ask that you mail them into the
6 Chief Engineer and they will be forwarded up to my
7 office. We will be happy to respond to them.

8 I would like to introduce the members
9 of the panel that are seated next to me tonight. To
10 my right is Michael Bertoulin. He is the Senior
11 Project Manager from Parsons Brinckerhoff who is
12 MassDOT's design consultant for this project. To
13 Mike's right is Mr. Joe Freeman. Mr. Joe Freeman is
14 from Tetra Tech Rizzo. He is the lead environmental
15 engineer for the project. To his right is Mr. Michael
16 Sheehan. He will be representing our Right-of-Way
17 office for MassDOT. And, to my far right at the end
18 of the table is Mr. Greg Tarbox from Arlington Typing
19 and Mailing. He will be providing a transcript, a
20 verbatim transcript for tonight's meeting.

21 I'd like to ask Mr. Michael Sheehan to
22 read the formal notice of meeting that appeared in the
23 *Amesbury News* on January 6th and 15th, and in the
24 *Newburyport Daily News* on January 7th and 14th.

1 MICHAEL SHEEHAN: "Notice of Public
2 Information Meeting, Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement
3 Project.

4 A Public Information Meeting will be
5 held by MassDOT-Highway Division to discuss the
6 Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project in Amesbury,
7 Salisbury, and Newburyport, MA. The Secretary's
8 Certificate on the Environmental Notification Form
9 (ENF) was received on July 10, 2009 and included a
10 scope of work for assessing various highway and bridge
11 alternatives that will be part of the federal and
12 state environmental review process.

13 WHERE: Amesbury Town Hall Auditorium
14 62 Friend Street
15 Amesbury, MA 01913
16 WHEN: Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.
17 PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting is to
18 present the highway widening and bridge
19 river crossing alternatives that are
20 being evaluated as part of the Draft
21 Environmental Impact Report/
22 Environmental Assessment process. The
23 evaluation is being performed as part
24 of a joint federal NEPA and state MEPA

1 environmental review process and in
2 accordance with the scope outlined in
3 the Secretary's Certificate for the
4 Environmental Notification Form. The
5 project team will also summarize
6 comments received to date and how they
7 are being incorporated into the
8 environmental evaluation. Following
9 the presentation, MassDOT staff will
10 lead a discussion to answer questions
11 and gather public comment on the
12 alternatives. Comments received will
13 be carefully considered as the
14 alternatives evaluation moves forward.

15 PROPOSAL: The project involves at its centerpiece
16 the replacement of the Whittier Bridge
17 over the Merrimack River. It also
18 includes the replacement or
19 reconstruction of four adjacent bridges
20 along I-95 in Amesbury and Newburyport
21 and other highway improvements between
22 Exit 57 and Exit 59. The proposed new
23 Whittier Bridge structure will have
24 four travel lanes and a shoulder and

1 breakdown lane in each direction. The
2 Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement
3 Project is one of the most significant
4 projects to be undertaken by MassDOT
5 under the Commonwealth' \$3 billion
6 Accelerated Bridge Program. When
7 completed, the project will provide
8 additional I-95 lane capacity to reduce
9 congestion and replacement/
10 rehabilitation of several structures
11 including the Whittier Bridge over the
12 Merrimack River.

13 The proposed work will include the
14 preparation of an Environmental
15 Assessment (EA) in accordance with the
16 National Environmental Policy Act
17 (NEPA) process. An Environmental
18 Notification Form was prepared in
19 accordance with the Massachusetts
20 Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and its
21 associated regulations (301 CMR 11.00)
22 and an Environmental Impact Report
23 (EIR) will be prepared for the project.
24 The project will also include the

1 preparation of a Section 4(f)
2 Evaluation in accordance with 4(f)
3 evaluation criteria. Wetland resource
4 areas will be delineated in accordance
5 with the Massachusetts Wetlands
6 Protection Act (MGL c. 131 § 40) and
7 the federal Clean Water Act.
8 Information, documentation, and support
9 will be prepared to assist in a Section
10 106 review of the impact to historic
11 resources for the project.

12 The community has declared that this
13 facility is accessible to all in compliance with the
14 ADA/Title II. However, persons in need of ADA/Title
15 II accommodations should contact Angela Rudikoff by
16 phone at (617) 973-7005, or email
17 angela.rudikoff@eot.state.ma.us. Requests must be
18 made at least 10 days prior to the date of the public
19 hearing.

20 Luisa Paiewonsky, Frank Tramontozzi,
21 Highway Division Administrator Chief Engineer
22 Boston, Massachusetts.”

23 MODERATOR O’DOWD: Thank you very much,
24 Michael.

1 The purpose behind tonight's meeting is
2 to give us an opportunity to make a presentation of
3 the status of the project as it exists today. Many of
4 you have had an opportunity to sit in on some of these
5 public meetings that we've had in either Salisbury,
6 Amesbury, or Newburyport, the most recent of which was
7 on December the 7th, 2009, just a month ago. And the
8 intent of that meeting at that time -- we're sort of
9 looking at this as being a two-part presentation, this
10 being part number two. There will be an awful lot of
11 overlap between the two. But the intent of the first
12 meeting on December the 7th was to try and provide the
13 public an opportunity to demonstrate that we have
14 received a number of comments during the ENF public
15 comment phase. Numerous individual letters have come
16 in, questions, comments regarding the project as well
17 as a number of comments submitted by regulatory and
18 compliance agencies. We wanted to be able to show
19 you, communicate to you, this is how we intend to move
20 forward with the project. This is how we intend to
21 address a number of the questions and comments that
22 have been raised and also provide you with some
23 additional information all of which is going to be
24 presented, once again, in a public document, Draft

1 Environmental Impact Report. This is an opportunity
2 for us to outreach to the public, keep you apprised as
3 to where we stand, what's going on. It's a highly
4 focal project in this area -- not only within this
5 area, but also within the Accelerated Bridge Program.

6 The funds are being made available
7 under the Accelerated Bridge Program, a \$3 billion
8 program which was signed into law into 2008 by
9 Governor Patrick. This project highlights one of the
10 major projects within the Accelerated Bridge Program.

11 So, I'd like to thank you all for
12 coming. Tonight's project, although I said it's going
13 to be part two, there will be some information
14 relative to the environmental documentation, but there
15 will be more information provided tonight regarding
16 the bridge type alternatives and the bridge crossing
17 alternatives that we are now considering and
18 evaluating as part of the project.

19 So, we have Mike Bertoulin here. Mike
20 is going to give us a presentation. And I would ask
21 that all comments, questions, or any inquiries be held
22 until such time as Mike has completed his
23 presentation. And I'd like to thank you all.

24 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Good evening.

1 We're going to walk through our presentation, which
2 some of you have viewed before, as Michael stated.
3 Some of this has been repeated. A lot of it has been
4 updated, although repeated. And there is a lot of new
5 elements in this presentation tonight as we take a
6 snapshot of where we're heading. But you'll see
7 inside the boxes in terms of where we are with the
8 current process.

9 I think we've heard it a couple of
10 times, but, basically, our project description it's
11 about replacing the Whittier Bridge and integrating
12 that back into the highway. It's dealing with a 1951
13 main span, which is the double-barrel, three-span,
14 continuous-riveted steel through truss. The bridge
15 has been rated as structurally deficient. It's
16 nearing the end of its economic life. It has a poor
17 structural rating. It has had excessive
18 deterioration. It's an older style, what we call a
19 non-redundant structure. It also has undergone a
20 yearlong set of repairs to keep it in operating
21 condition for the public.

22 Also, this bridge tied into old design
23 standards is geometrically deficient. It means that
24 the approaches to the bridge, the shoulders, the

1 configuration of the highway within the bridge
2 elements is sufficient based upon today's standards,
3 has lack of maneuvering room for traffic in case they
4 have to veer. With a two-foot shoulder it creates a
5 number of safety conditions that we can get into a
6 little bit.

7 In addition, this section of highway is
8 actually left over primarily from the alignment of the
9 original project in '51, which was the relocated Route
10 1 project. Later, that project got incorporated into
11 the Interstate in 1956, got rebadged as I-95. Route 1
12 returned to its coastal configuration that it is in
13 today.

14 A good portion of the highway from
15 Danvers to Newburyport was rebuilt in the '70s up to
16 today's modern standards, four-lane configuration. It
17 transitions down to a three-lane configuration at the
18 bridge. Because at the time the bridge did not need
19 to be replaced, traffic needs were not sufficient to
20 warrant additional lanes at that point in time. So,
21 it's a holdover from an earlier design. And that
22 design runs up to the merge with 495, which was built
23 also around 1970 where that four-lane configuration
24 comes in.

1 So, one of our key issues, also, is
2 Exit 58. It has older standard what we call
3 acceleration and deceleration lanes approaching the
4 exits and onramps.

5 As has been stated, this is a key
6 portion of the Accelerated Bridge Program, which the
7 overall goal is to reduce the number of structurally
8 deficient bridges over the life of the program. It is
9 an eight-year program. And that program will start in
10 July of '08 and will come to completion in June of
11 2016. Basically, it's to remove current bridges from
12 the list and prevent additional bridges from becoming
13 classified as structurally deficient.

14 Project design issues. Those of you
15 who have been to our presentation before have seen
16 this board, which basically runs from the lower -- the
17 lower limit of the project at Exit 57, which is Route
18 113, up to and beyond the merge of 495 coming in, up
19 and actually terminating up at Exit 60, Route 286,
20 which are the two exits headed off to the beaches,
21 about a half a mile from the New Hampshire border.
22 So, it's about three-and-a-half miles long, but the
23 project is driven by the bridge river crossings
24 through the design and alignment.

1 The bridge crossings drive the project.
2 There are two navigable channels in the bridge, one an
3 Army Corps channel which runs from the Hines Bridge up
4 under the main span, and now there's a secondary
5 channel, known locally as the Steamboat Channel, which
6 is used by a lot of the smaller commercial vessels and
7 pleasure craft on the southern side of the river.

8 We have to deal with the overall design
9 and studies associated with the impact on the existing
10 bridge, right-of-way constraints, which we'll get
11 into, and, once again, there are Exit 58, Route 110
12 improvement needs as well as it's crossing the old
13 abandoned railroad bed up there, which portions of it
14 have been incorporated into a rail trail program. And
15 we're looking up at what we call the northern terminus
16 of the project, a number of ways to terminate the
17 project at the end up near the Route 60 area.

18 During our MEPA notification when we
19 had the meeting last June, our public meeting held in
20 Newburyport, we presented the project, the scope, the
21 purpose and need, and we received the comments which
22 Michael O'Dowd mentioned coming back. We received a
23 MEPA ENF certificate on the scope of the project area
24 that we're studying. We also received 17 letters with

1 approximately 150 individual comments associated with
2 them. These came from a number of departments,
3 whether the Department of Environmental Protection,
4 Mass. Historical Commission, Massachusetts Coastal
5 Zone Management, Massachusetts Natural Heritage and
6 Endangered Species Program, the Department of
7 Conservation and Recreation, Massachusetts Audubon
8 Society, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, the
9 City of Newburyport had multiple letters, the Town of
10 Salisbury had letters as well as, I just noticed again
11 when I did this editing, Amesbury did have letters
12 also -- they're not listed there. The Coastal Trail
13 Organization also had a letter in. And, we received
14 seven letters from residents.

15 We've broken those areas down into
16 seven major areas of comment, the first one being
17 questioning or wanting us to justify the need for the
18 project, then also wanting us to fully document
19 alternatives, analysis to identify alternatives, which
20 is part of our process that we'll brief you on
21 tonight. We were also asked to analyze the impacts to
22 the river navigation from the construction of the new
23 bridge standpoint. Also, issues that came up were a
24 combination of bicycle and recreation trails within

1 the project area. Stormwater impacts were voiced by
2 many of the entities. Rare species impacts were also
3 noted within the river and along the river, as well as
4 wetlands impacts.

5 The major areas of comment and detail
6 under the justification of need for the project was
7 basically the bridge replacement, wanted us to
8 document the existing condition of the bridge and
9 whether rehabilitation was possible -- and I'll
10 address that shortly; the highway widening, document
11 the need for the additional lanes.

12 In the alternatives analysis, we needed
13 to identify the process to come up with a preferred
14 alternative to dealing with the existing bridge, the
15 rehab, the rehabilitation and retrofitting options,
16 the potential to retain the bridge with an adjacent
17 structure. All of those have been within the family
18 of options and alternatives that we have been
19 reviewing.

20 There's also under new bridge options,
21 we have what we call bridge alignment options to east
22 of the existing structure, to the west of the existing
23 structure, one which actually goes around east and
24 west of the existing structure. Those have all been

1 studied also, as well as the impacts of a six-lane
2 configuration have been studied as opposed to the
3 eight-lane.

4 From the highway standpoint, we're
5 looking at the widening. And this basically has to do
6 with north of Exhibit 58, which is Route 110, up to
7 the northern end of the project. We've been looking
8 at ways to widen the highway. We can either widen to
9 the interior of the median area, we can widen to the
10 exterior shoulders. It could be a combination of both
11 in terms of northbound/southbound. We've gone through
12 the studies and the impacts there.

13 We also have analyzed the impacts to
14 the river and have done a complete process of working
15 on our hydrographic model. We had monitoring out on
16 the river for about 60 days: flows, tidal
17 information, plus historic information. And we're
18 working on the impact of what the new pier supports
19 for the bridge would be from the structure to the
20 river.

21 In addition, the other items had to do
22 with a combination of bicycle and recreation trails in
23 the project area, you know, east/west corridor to
24 connect Moseley Park. And there were a number of

1 comments on north/south connections across the
2 Merrimack. There were a number of comments on the
3 combination for connections to existing trails. There
4 were a number of comments on those along the
5 alignment.

6 Stormwater impacts. Compliance with
7 the stormwater standards would definitely be required
8 for this project. The standards that we move forward
9 with now are quite different from when the project was
10 originally constructed back in the '50s. Also is the
11 protection of existing drinking water supplies, which
12 occur in Newburyport as well as Salisbury.

13 There are rare species impacts in terms
14 of the shortnose sturgeon within the Merrimack River
15 and bald eagles along the Merrimack River, primarily
16 to the west of the bridge alignment.

17 And, also, we need to study our wetland
18 impacts from the proposed project and demonstrate the
19 need for wetlands variance if necessary, and, bottom
20 line, to avoid impacts if possible.

21 From a purpose and need standpoint, in
22 addressing the existing facility in terms of lane and
23 bridge, in looking at the bridge, the current
24 structure has a poor structural rating. And we just

1 finished up a feasibility of rehabbing it and that has
2 just been finished up and submitted to the state for
3 review. And I'll just address that briefly in a
4 minute.

5 Also, we've addressed the geometric
6 deficiencies. And that's the highway alignment from
7 the older standards to today's standards up and down
8 the alignment. And these are primarily driven by lack
9 of shoulders on the bridge, highway capacity impacted
10 by insufficient lanes. And those of you from the area
11 are very familiar with what happens on the weekends,
12 especially in the summertime around here in terms of
13 how well the facility operates.

14 And, also, Exit 58, which is the Route
15 110 up through Exit 60, which is Route 286, the on-
16 and off-ramp operations.

17 From a rehab assessment standpoint, we
18 have studied all the existing information on the
19 existing bridge over the past number of years. The
20 last time it had an extensive review for a design
21 upgrade was in 2000. And we've come back with a
22 report, which is in the state right now, showing that
23 the feasibility of rehab is basically very slim in
24 terms of our ability to pull that off. It is not

1 recommended under any circumstances to proceed with a
2 full rehabilitation of the structure to try to extend
3 its life for the next 50 to 75 years.

4 From a safety standpoint, we've been
5 looking at the overall roadway and how it operates
6 related to -- and the safety point of view comes from
7 the fact of looking at congestion in terms of level of
8 service. And I have a few slides which will talk
9 about that in terms of what you should be designing
10 the facility for and then when the level of service --
11 there's a couple of levels of services you can exceed
12 before it requires you to really go back and design
13 again.

14 We're going to be looking at the
15 roadway geometry, lane widths, shoulder widths,
16 roadside obstacles, which are all safety-related
17 issues, and also the roadway condition type safety.
18 And these get into accidents. We completed an
19 accident study which I'm going to get into having to
20 do with potential roadway issues -- of course, weather
21 and environmental are some issues which get into
22 accidents.

23 But if you look at -- we're going to
24 talk I-95 southbound and then I'll address I-95

1 northbound. And we've done an extensive review of the
2 accident data from 2005 through 2009. And there's a
3 series of clusters of accidents, which in this
4 lighting with my pointer -- there we go -- this is up
5 at Exit 60. There's a small cluster southbound,
6 relatively minor. We get another larger cluster here,
7 which basically is the approach to the 495 split,
8 another cluster in this area. And you're all very
9 familiar with the tanker turnover, which although the
10 tanker had been headed northbound, was caused by a
11 vehicle heading southbound coming across the bridge
12 and coming across the median that caused that to flip.

13 A little bit of a blow-up so we can
14 actually see it a little bit better. The top half of
15 that sketch shows you that we have accident clusters
16 up near and approaching Exit 60. Each one of those
17 dots is an accident. And the colors -- I know they're
18 hard to see -- but the colors basically they're
19 categorized in terms of orange, yellow, and red. Red
20 would have been a fatality; yellow, there's injuries
21 associated with it; and the orange ones have to do
22 with property damage.

23 If you look here on southbound traffic
24 data over that five-year period, there's a cluster

1 basically where 286 comes onto the highway headed
2 southbound in this area which is only about less than
3 three-quarters of a mile between coming on to getting
4 off of 495. You can also see there's a very large
5 cluster in the area right in the middle as traffic is
6 trying to sort its way out to decide whether one needs
7 to cross over and go from 60 to continue south on 95
8 or if the traffic is on 95 and wants to veer off and
9 go down 495. And that's where the bulk of those
10 accidents have been. And, as I said, there's a very
11 large configuration there. And the improvements that
12 we'll be talking about later and working in the
13 design, we have improvements in that area for the
14 addition of a lane known as an auxiliary lane, which
15 will help sort out some of the sorting of traffic in
16 that weave zone that we have, which should mitigate
17 the problems that are there today.

18 As we go south, in addition to that,
19 clustered around the Interchange 58, which is the
20 Route 110, you can see clusters on the southbound side
21 at both of the onramps. Those onramps either coming
22 from Route 110 east or west coming on at our location,
23 and actually exiting the highway, are also a problem
24 today. There are a number of rear-end collisions in

1 those sort what we call acceleration and deceleration
2 areas. Those will be reviewed for improvements also.
3 Some of the existing -- we can readily improve a
4 couple of the ramp areas in that area, but not all of
5 them at the current time, in terms of the level of
6 study we're into.

7 In addition, we have on the bridge
8 itself, a number of accidents on the bridge itself.
9 And this gets into many of these are in a narrowed
10 area, very little room for limited recovery from if
11 anyone makes a little swerve vehicles have no place to
12 go. And that's the bulk of the majority of the
13 accidents there. And a new bridge with appropriate
14 shoulders and additional lanes will increase the
15 safety on that facility dramatically.

16 Looking northbound, it's the same
17 issue. We have a number of clusters of accidents.
18 I'll go into it in the more detailed slides, again.
19 But, basically, the Whittier Bridge and the approach,
20 we have that reverse curve when you're going from
21 north to south, getting off the bridge as you come
22 across the old narrow alignment and then flare back
23 over to meet up with the alignment before the 58
24 Interchange. A number of accidents at the ramps

1 themselves. A number of those are rear-end collisions
2 especially as traffic queues up and especially in the
3 commuter peaks that are there. And, unfortunately in
4 this area, there was a fatal back in 2005 from a rear-
5 end collision at the Exit 58 area, as well as further
6 up, just before Exit 60, there was another accident up
7 there with a vehicle flipping and that was a fatal in
8 this area. We believe that we have improvements for
9 those areas.

10 Looking at it in terms of a little bit
11 of a blow-up, the northern part of the project first,
12 as you can see, a cluster of accidents right around
13 the Exit 60 area. We believe we can clean up issues
14 associated to the south. We're still looking at our
15 ability to mitigate the higher level of accidents on
16 the northern part of the interchange.

17 The rest of the interchange with the
18 volume of traffic coming in with the merge from 495 to
19 95, with the widened alignment, there will be an extra
20 lane there which allows also to solve the problems
21 there.

22 From the data we had, we had a curious
23 grouping of accidents on 95 in the vicinity of 495.
24 And we can't quite figure out what is really causing

1 them. It's a very straight section of road. And,
2 also, we find that some of the reports, in terms of
3 the level of accuracy of some of them, it's difficult
4 to interpolate from them, how they were written up, in
5 terms of whether they meant at that location or really
6 whether they meant at the location where 495 is
7 merging with 95. We suspect that a number of those
8 accidents really relate a little bit further up to the
9 merge, but we're taking them for how they're written,
10 although it's not quite matching up with our
11 expectations of the data.

12 And you head further south at Exit 58,
13 there's a large cluster of accidents at the two ramps,
14 the northernmost ramp from 95 to Route 110 westbound
15 as well as the coming up grade to the ramp which will
16 take you eastbound on Route 110. Through the widened
17 section, and the better alignment, and the ability for
18 us to integrate accelerations and decelerations there,
19 we have the ability to improve that dramatically
20 through new designs that we'll have with the
21 alignments.

22 In addition, the real issue here, as
23 you can see, is the Whittier Bridge. There is a
24 dramatic increase of accidents on the Whittier Bridge

1 itself. And the drivers for that -- and, actually,
2 it's along the whole alignment. You basically are
3 coming up from the south expecting a four-lane highway
4 interchange. Right after Interchange 57, the traffic
5 comes on very quickly while in a curve, you lose one
6 of the lanes. You drop to a three-lane section.
7 Right in that transition area there's a number of
8 accidents right as you approach Pine Hill going over.

9 And then, actually, on the Whittier
10 Bridge itself, there's a dramatic number of accidents
11 out there. And one of them was shown basically in the
12 picture earlier, showing a typical accident which does
13 happen on the bridge, basically the inability to
14 recover from another car intruding into your lane,
15 sideswipes, bouncing off the barriers, and so on.
16 There's a high level of accidents out there where a
17 newer facility with appropriate shoulders will
18 dramatically improve.

19 The other thing -- and I know this is
20 just a table of numbers -- but, basically, the real
21 issue with the facility is that the overall design is
22 driven by the weekend volumes, and the weekend volumes
23 northbound being basically Friday through Saturday,
24 and then the returning weekend traffic on the

1 southbound, Saturday and Sunday traffic, being
2 dramatic in terms of the increases in traffic over the
3 normal daily commuting. And the peak is also driven -
4 - it has certain peaks throughout the seasons. It
5 peaks in the later fall when people travel up to see
6 the leaves. It peaks again in the snow season. But
7 the real heavy peak is the peak of people heading
8 north and also the peak people heading to the local
9 beaches which happens in the summer. I know this past
10 summer there were some very dramatic traffic problems
11 in the area contributing to the section between 495
12 and 286. And all of that has to do with inadequate
13 lane capacity to deal with the volumes of traffic.

14 What this graph shows you is what I was
15 just talking about. Typically, in January, you're
16 seeing traffic in the high thirties, building
17 throughout the year until you get into the July and
18 summer where traffic is in the 70,000 range for
19 vehicles. This is 2007. And, actually, we've got a
20 little bit further data which shows that really the
21 traffic number should be around 73,000 in terms of
22 what we're looking at in that peak time.

23 I mentioned the word level of service.
24 And, level of service basically has to do with -- it

1 has to do with delays on the highways and it also has
2 to do with density, how many vehicles per mile in
3 terms of how traffic is operating. And the design for
4 an urban-suburban freeway or interstate highway is to
5 design it for Level C. Level C is the picture on the
6 left side of the screen where traffic is moving along
7 freely. It's moving at or above design speed. There
8 is plenty of room to recover from traffic incidents
9 and lane shifts that people do in front of you.

10 As you get up to level of service D,
11 the density starts to pick up a little bit. When
12 you're in level of service D, you start to pick up a
13 little higher level of accidents start to occur. The
14 ability to recover from a vehicle maybe swerving or
15 swaying into your lane gets a little bit more limited.

16 Then when you get a level of service E,
17 that gets into where anything can happen real quickly
18 and, you know, brake lights come on, a lot of brake
19 lights come on. This typically is -- level of service
20 E is where you're seeing a lot of rear-end collisions
21 on highways. This basically explains a lot of the
22 cluster accidents that you're seeing on 95/495
23 southbound.

24 This just shows you the growth in the

1 area, tied to area growth as well as growth to the
2 corridor heading up north. In 1980, just after the
3 highway was converted to two lanes in each direction
4 with shoulders as it was originally built, the three-
5 lane configuration it's at right now on the Whittier
6 Bridge, you were seeing 30,000 vehicles. As we've
7 moved forward and we peaked in '07, we are approaching
8 75,000 vehicles. Now, with the energy crunch and the
9 economy over the past year or two, there was a little
10 bit of a drop back. Those numbers are coming back, in
11 terms of especially where the energy costs aren't as
12 dramatic as they were. So, traffic has bounced back.

13 Basically, a growth rate has been
14 assumed for the highway for our design years. And you
15 always have a design year when you're designing a
16 highway in terms of what you want to design it for.
17 And then there's a design life that's extending on
18 beyond that. Our design year that we're looking for
19 is 2030 traffic. And if we don't make any
20 improvements in that area that's red right there, 95
21 northbound will primarily drop to a level of service D
22 for most of the time, and southbound, in here, will be
23 level of service E, which is basically that Sunday
24 afternoon impact that we have that you're already

1 seeing.

2 With improvements to the highway as
3 well as the add a lane through this section, from a
4 design standpoint we can ensure that the highway
5 remains at a level of service C through this
6 timeframe, up through the 2030 design year. And so
7 that is the goal of the project.

8 As we move forward, knowing that we
9 have a strong purpose and need for the project, we
10 then wanted to go out and look at within our study
11 area that three-and-a-half mile corridor, from Exit 57
12 just north of it, up to Exit 60. Part of the process
13 through the Environmental Impact Report and the
14 Environmental Assessment, which is the mirror image we
15 do for the federal process, is to basically document
16 all of the cultural resources. The river hydraulics
17 have been modeled. The wetlands have been delineated
18 and concurred in by the local conservation
19 commissions.

20 Some of you may have been to our
21 meetings in November and early January when we went to
22 the three surrounding towns after we had delineated
23 the wetlands, and as the map will show you basically a
24 summary level of the wetlands along the highway, and

1 we went through a process of documenting and reaching
2 concurrence with each of the town conservation
3 commission, so that this is the base condition that
4 we're dealing with, so this is what we're going to be
5 designing around, so this is how we can assess our
6 impacts to those resources.

7 Also, we're studying the stormwater
8 impacts. We've been studying how the drainage works
9 in the area. We're studying how the drainage will
10 work through the new facility. We're also studying
11 the impacts of what the new regulations, which are
12 much tighter than what they used to be of stormwater
13 discharges, would be on the design of the appropriate
14 facilities.

15 Also, we are looking at the water
16 supply protection zones that the map documented. And
17 all of that gets looked at as we go forward with our
18 assessment process.

19 We also have been out already looking
20 at -- checking noise baseline data in terms of noise
21 levels on the highway as they exist today. We went
22 out a couple of times and did local week reviews to
23 pick up the travel noise from the normal week as well
24 as weekend travel. And that was done on a 24-hour

1 basis. And all of it has to do with certain limits,
2 tied to certain backgrounds, certain criteria, to
3 determine where we are, and what the impacts are, and
4 how we are possibly making things better or worse
5 through the process. And all that is documented in
6 the Environmental Impact Report, as well as there's an
7 air quality model being developed which basically ties
8 vehicle tailpipes and travel delays to a model in
9 terms of how it's dealing with the air quality in the
10 area.

11 And this is just out of -- pulled out
12 of one of the reports. But we had a specialist go out
13 and canvass the corridor looking for any historic or
14 archaeological areas that may be of interest or areas
15 that we should be avoiding throughout the project. We
16 have just finished up that documentation.

17 One of our historic resources is the
18 Whittier Bridge. It has the potential of being listed
19 as a contributing historic element and we're going
20 through a process of dealing with that. And the first
21 would be whether or not we're going to have an adverse
22 impact on the structure, meaning if that's what we
23 are, in the removal of the bridge, which we think
24 we're going to have to do, we have to deal with a

1 process which may be documentation and moving forward
2 and meeting with other historical entities as we move
3 forward. That's all part of the process.

4 This is an aerial view modeled.
5 Basically, it covers from the lower right corner,
6 that's the Route 1 bridge, all the way to roughly the
7 center of the screen where the large curve in the
8 river is. That's 95. We've gone through and we're
9 studying and we're creating a hydraulic model of that
10 whole area. And that model will be used to determine
11 whether our new bridge structure will alter any of the
12 hydraulics in the area with the new structure as
13 opposed to current conditions that are there today.
14 So that is all in place and we should have our
15 hydraulic model completed within the next couple of
16 months.

17 Zooming in on the area, we actually
18 have the two channels in this area, one the northern
19 channel in that more darker blue area which actually
20 starts on the other side of Deer Island. It runs up
21 through Hines Bridge, which is a swing bridge. And
22 then you have the 150-foot wide channel underneath the
23 existing Whittier Bridge with a 56-foot clearance.
24 And that defines the height of the tallest ship that

1 can pass and go up river at this point in time.

2 There is also on the southern portion
3 of the channel, which lines up with the Chain Bridge,
4 the Chain Bridge has a height limit of 28-foot and the
5 actual height limit on the Whittier Bridge is 32-foot,
6 but the defining element there, the restricting
7 element, is the 28 from the Chain. It also has a
8 hundred-foot channel, basically which is just wrapping
9 around the shoaling area, which is in the middle of
10 the channel where there are actually rock outcrops at
11 extreme low tide.

12 So we're studying that. We're studying
13 the impacts. And we're looking at placement of piers
14 in the water to assure that we're not having a
15 negative impact on the hydraulics and flow of the
16 river, as well as the currents, and as well as boating
17 impacts and ensuring we're having no impacts to the
18 designated channels that exist today.

19 There are a number of facilities along
20 the river which use it. We're aware of a number of
21 marinas. This basically shows you the marinas in the
22 easterly area from the bridge out and beyond Route 1
23 up and down the river. Also, there are a number of
24 facilities as we move up river. There's a lot of

1 boating interest on this water. This is actually a --
2 it's a highly used waterway in the better warmer
3 months with pleasure craft, small fishing vessels, a
4 number of sightseeing vessels which go up and down the
5 river. And, actually, the majority of them tend to
6 use what we call the steamboat channel, that southern
7 channel, because it has more unrestricted access and
8 not having to deal with the swing bridge.

9 We have been out there as part of our
10 assessment of taking cores of the river bottom, which
11 is primarily rock in this area. And this last fall we
12 were out there with a small jack-up barge which could
13 sit up on stilts and actually drill down with four-
14 inch cores into the river bottom extracting out the
15 rock to check its quality and how well it can be used
16 for foundation material for the new structure. So,
17 we've completed that and we're probably into our
18 assessments of that material.

19 Other resources up and down the
20 alignment have to do with existing and planned trails.
21 This actually is a pullout of the Coastal Trails
22 Coalition, their map designating a number of trails.
23 We're well aware of the Ghost Trail running up the
24 Bartlett now, as well as the Powwow Trail coming off

1 the shopping center, and the section in the middle
2 which is not complete at this point in time. Our
3 intention is to -- whatever widening we do is to
4 preserve the corridor of the old railroad so that when
5 the land is picked up and the decisions are made by
6 the towns to move forward with that project that it
7 can do so without a negative impact on this project.

8 We're also well aware of some walking
9 trails on the other shore and some desire lines and
10 connections from Moseley Woods potentially through the
11 Water Department and maybe getting back over to
12 Moseley Park. And so those are things that we're
13 watching and looking at in terms of assessing any
14 negative impacts that we'd have with our design and
15 trying to ensure that we don't.

16 This is just basically Moseley Park.
17 We're aware of the park and its relationship off
18 alignment from 95 at Exit 57.

19 Moseley Woods, this shows you a little
20 bit higher detail of some of the informal trails that
21 are out there going to the Water Department land. And
22 we know there's been some mention, some desires about
23 the ability to get across that area from an east-west
24 standpoint.

1 As we get into looking at the impacts
2 along the alignment, there's the project has been
3 broken down from the southern project limit, which is
4 just north of Interchange 57, up to the northern
5 project limit which is just at Exit 60, 286. We
6 basically have broken the project into five
7 watersheds. We're calling Zone One on the southern
8 shore of Newburyport, from that point of where there's
9 a crest in the highway, about 500-foot south of Pine
10 Hill Bridge, all of the water from that zone
11 eventually travels down and gets into the river. This
12 is actually designed as a closed system, which
13 basically means that there are manholes out there and
14 catch basins which direct the water to a pipe system
15 and discharge it to the river, which is why when that
16 tanker truck rolled over last summer, the petroleum
17 product was quickly channeled into the drainage
18 system, into the pipes, and directly discharged into
19 the river. And, luckily, it was gasoline as opposed
20 to diesel, or an oily substance. So, basically, there
21 were limited impacts and it evaporated, but the ground
22 contamination was relatively light in terms of what
23 happened which could have been a lot worse.

24 The other drainage zone is the river

1 itself, which we call Zone Two in terms of our
2 reviews.

3 Zone Three basically gets up to the 58
4 Interchange, which is Route 110, to the river. All of
5 the water within this area eventually makes it back
6 into the marshes, either to the west or the east of
7 the highway, and coming down through closed drainage
8 systems and feeding the marshes and eventually getting
9 back to the river.

10 The next crest, or high point, within
11 the overall watershed areas is really defined by the
12 railroad bridges. The railway, at the northern limit
13 of Interchange 58, that zone runs from there up to and
14 approaching Exit 60. Right in the middle of it is the
15 large loop ramp of 495. All of this area basically
16 flows down to that lower area, a lot of it gets
17 filtered and goes into that -- into the loop area,
18 makes its way out through (Meter) Brook eventually to
19 the Atlantic.

20 And the last portion of our project has
21 a small zone, Zone Five. That is up near our project
22 limit at Exit 60. That water eventually works its way
23 into Cains Brook. Cains Brook crosses over to New
24 Hampshire and that water eventually making it out to

1 the ocean.

2 From an impact standpoint, this being
3 the southern approach in Newburyport to the river with
4 the alignment, this shows you actually the Newburyport
5 Water Protection Zones. They have a surface water
6 protection zone which gets very close to the existing
7 highway as well as a couple of wellheads and overall
8 water protection zones associated with the wells on
9 either side of the highway.

10 In addition, up in the -- this is
11 actually a little bit more of a detail -- it shows you
12 in the upper area how close it gets to the highway in
13 terms of the protection zone around the spring, which
14 is one of the water supplies for Newburyport. The
15 existing water protection zones comes to within 30-
16 foot of the existing pavement in that area. There's
17 also an outstanding resource water limit for the rest
18 of the facility, which some of that runs right down
19 the median in terms of a protection area for the water
20 that's being pulled from the ground.

21 In addition, there are other wells to
22 the northern portion of the project. These actually
23 are outside of our project limit, but we've addressed
24 them here because there is an overall zone which comes

1 down into our project limit, but the primary
2 protection zones in this area are outside of the
3 project limit, but we're also aware of those and we're
4 reviewing those in terms of what impacts we may
5 possibly have in that area with drainage and what
6 things we need to do to protect it.

7 As I had stated earlier, we'd gone
8 through a complete wetland analysis along the
9 corridor. This shows you the southern wetlands. What
10 we see in here, in Newburyport, the only wetlands that
11 we have in Newburyport along the alignment are there's
12 a very limited salt marsh band and that is along the
13 southern shore of the river -- right there -- as well
14 as there's a matching one on the northern shore in
15 Amesbury. In addition to that, there are bordering
16 vegetated wetlands. And, actually, a lot of this was
17 actually created by the older construction style back
18 in the '50s and '70s when the highways were built and
19 improved, which created drainage swales, which over
20 time have turned them into what are known as bordering
21 vegetated wetlands. And those are all documented to
22 ensure that our design will account for them and limit
23 the impacts to them.

24 The northern wetlands for this project

1 are all within Salisbury. Salisbury has a
2 considerable amount of wetlands along the alignment,
3 especially within the loop ramp area feeding out to
4 and eventually going to (Meter) Brook.

5 And, at this point in time, I'd like to
6 turn it over to Joe Freeman. He's heading up our
7 environmental process for the project. He's going to
8 walk you through the process we're using for our
9 alternatives analysis.

10 JOE FREEMAN: Thank you, Mike.

11 Really the heart of any environmental
12 assessment and Environmental Impact Report --

13 AUDIENCE: It's really hard to hear.

14 JOE FREEMAN: How's that? Is that
15 better?

16 AUDIENCE: Yes.

17 JOE FREEMAN: Okay. As I said, I want
18 to talk about alternatives and how we're looking at
19 analyzing these alternatives, screening them down to a
20 manageable number. The heart of any environmental
21 impact assessment, Environmental Impact Report, is
22 really looking at alternatives. That's the planning
23 documents and planning tools to help us identify what
24 those feasible alternatives are.

1 We have alternatives both with the
2 bridge crossings over the river themselves. There are
3 eight different alternatives that we're looking at as
4 well as highway widening alternatives, inside/outside,
5 a combination of those, where we stop it, that sort of
6 thing.

7 When we begin with alternatives, we
8 look at this as really as a two-step process. The
9 third step is the detailed environmental impact
10 assessment, which occurs later in our document.

11 We have a first phase screen, again, of
12 all these eight different river crossing alternatives
13 which Mike went through way back at the beginning of
14 the presentation, as well as the highway assessment.
15 More of a qualitative assessment than a detailed
16 quantitative assessment leads us to narrow that down
17 to what we consider to be a range of feasible
18 alternatives, a smaller number of feasible
19 alternatives which we take through a more detailed
20 second phase screening.

21 The first phase screening, we looked at
22 a number of factors: Purpose and need, which Mike
23 talked about earlier; does the alternative meet what
24 we consider to be the need for the project; does it

1 address the obvious safety concerns; does it provide
2 us with the adequate number of travel lanes and
3 capacity for future traffic volumes; what's the height
4 configuration, the bridge configuration, how does that
5 impact the right-of-way, the resources in the river or
6 along the corridor; how does it rank in terms of the
7 traffic impacts; the right-of-way impacts; cost; more
8 difficult to construct than other alternatives; would
9 it take longer, you know, the schedule; other
10 environmental factors, wetlands, navigation, impact on
11 rare species, etc.

12 The river crossing, those are the ones
13 that we talked about. The no build is there because
14 that is a requirement of the MEPA process. No build
15 for this process means we sort of stabilize the bridge
16 and that's it. We walk away; nothing else. That's
17 going to be carried through because that's a
18 requirement of the process. We'll address it when we
19 rehabilitate the bridge or reconstruct the bridge in
20 stages.

21 Retrofit the new six-lane bridge,
22 again, that doesn't really meet our purpose and need
23 because it doesn't provide us with the capacity we
24 need for the traffic volumes and the various

1 combinations of eight-lane bridges.

2 Highway: We've widened to the inside,
3 we've widened to the outside, a combination of that,
4 or do we stop the widening at Route 110, Exit 58.

5 With the east alternative, which is one
6 of the alternatives that's surviving our screening
7 process to date, there are several different types of
8 bridge types that also have to be evaluated as part of
9 that. And here's a list of several of those. The
10 girder bridges, box bridges -- that's sort of a plan
11 view of that shows what a box bridge or a segmental
12 bridge might look like.

13 Again, the segmental concrete option,
14 the darker shading in the middle of the existing
15 bridge. Downstream or to the east is a new bridge.
16 And, again, once you move traffic, make that wide
17 enough for six lanes during construction, move traffic
18 onto that so you can take down the existing bridge in
19 one fell swoop and build a new four-lane southbound
20 bridge approximately where the existing bridge is,
21 that's what this slide is showing us here.

22 Again, two construction phases -- a lot
23 simpler than some of the other alternatives that we
24 have looked at -- and one demolition phase, bring it

1 all down in one phase. It saves time. It saves
2 schedule. It saves money.

3 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: It's animation,
4 Joe. Just click through it.

5 JOE FREEMAN: Right. Animation.

6 So, existing. There's our phase one
7 where we build the permanent northbound bridge, widen
8 up to handle the six lanes of traffic, demolish the
9 existing bridge, build the new southbound bridge, and
10 then there's our permanent condition, four lanes in
11 each direction.

12 One of the other alternatives that's
13 surviving our screening process to date is the east
14 and west side, two bridges, one on each side, four
15 lanes. Again, the same bridge types, but the options,
16 the impacts are different in several key areas.

17 I-95 widening both to the south of the
18 bridge and to the north of the bridge up to 286,
19 inside or outside. They can differ if we go on either
20 northbound or southbound. Obviously, we have a very
21 wide median. We'd like to take advantage of that.
22 Minimizing impacts to the ramps at 110 is a key factor
23 for us as well as that horizontal curve that Mike
24 talked as you're coming across the bridge. And,

1 bridge pier constraints. Some of the locations to the
2 west or the alignments to the west of the existing
3 bridge, we're really constrained because of the
4 hydraulics, the location of the main navigation
5 channel from where those bridge piers can be located
6 and the kind of height.

7 Do we terminate the widening at Exit 60
8 is one of the alternatives we looked at. We think
9 from based on the traffic data, and primarily the
10 accident data, which Mike ran through earlier, that's
11 not a good option. So, sorry, no, we'll take it up to
12 that. One of the options we looked at was terminating
13 at Exit 58 or Route 110. That's not a good option.
14 So, several issues associated with 60 here.

15 Here's one of our options: Maintain
16 four lanes northbound up to 495. The lane balance
17 principle, that's the idea that you want a consistent
18 experience as you drive through the corridor. Right
19 now, you're coming up from Peabody, it's four lanes;
20 on the bridge it's three lanes all the way to 495.
21 And then if you're going up into New Hampshire and
22 into Maine, it's four lanes again. We'd like to have
23 that consistent four-lane. That's a good idea.
24 That's good highway design.

1 So, again, these are just looking at
2 several of the options for how we widen that, widen to
3 the inside, which we think is the best one. That's
4 the option that's survived our screening so far.

5 The second phase of the screening where
6 we take that smaller number of options and we start
7 looking at whittling them down and really identifying
8 what we are going to call our preferred alternatives.
9 When you go through the NEPA and MEPA documents, you
10 want to have a preferred alternative identified
11 generally. That's the purpose of the second phase
12 screening.

13 A more detailed assessment. These are
14 the factors we looked at, additional factors here.
15 And, again, the purpose is to identify that preferred
16 alternative which will be carried through the detailed
17 Environmental Impact Assessment.

18 So, these are the second phase
19 alternatives that we're looking at. Again, that no
20 build, as I said, that has to be carried through. The
21 new eight-lane east river crossing, the new bridge to
22 the east, a new southbound bridge approximately where
23 the current bridge is, or the new eight-lane east-west
24 with four lane bridges on either side of the existing

1 bridge.

2 And the highway alternative is down to
3 one, the inside widening. That really is a far
4 superior option. So, and that's common to both of
5 those bridge crossing alternatives.

6 So, again, once we get through the
7 environmental process, we'll have a fully documented
8 preferred alternative that will be documented through
9 the environmental MEPA and NEPA documents.

10 Here's a sneak peek at our schedule for
11 public review of the Draft Environmental Impact
12 Report, environmental assessment, that will be filed
13 and available for public review this fall. You have a
14 45-day extension review for people. After that, the
15 processes, the federal and state processes, diverge
16 slightly. On the state side, we'll have a Final EIR.
17 Since we're doing an environmental assessment, on the
18 federal side we want to get to this point, what's
19 called a FONSI, a Finding of No Significant Impact,
20 which would be issued by the Federal Highway
21 Administration.

22 Next steps. This is what we're looking
23 at: Documenting our preferred alignment alternatives;
24 our preferred bridge alternative. We'll get into that

1 in greater detail in a few minutes here. And, again,
2 at the point of MEPA/NEPA, it will result in our
3 preferred alternative, which we will identify.

4 With that, I'm going to turn it back to
5 Mike to go through perspectives on the bridge.

6 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Thanks, Joe.

7 As we move forward, where we are now is
8 looking at some different bridge alternatives for the
9 site. And, what we've done is we're basically at this
10 point in time looking at three different viewpoints.
11 And you'll see this consistently on the bridges that
12 we're kind of looking at right now.

13 All of this is very preliminary. We've
14 just gotten -- have some of it done. We actually have
15 some additional viewing perspectives that we're
16 working on. When we meet again with you folks in
17 three months, because basically we've made a
18 commitment of getting back quarterly, we'll have much
19 more information on this to show you.

20 But, this view is from Amesbury. I
21 think it's from Captain's Park looking to the east at
22 the existing bridge. So we'll have views of the
23 bridges that we have modeled from this configuration.

24 This basically is from Moseley Woods.

1 There's an overlook area within Moseley Woods. And
2 that's the existing bridge. And we have the new
3 bridges are modeled from this viewpoint also as well
4 as from the Chain Bridge. We had this viewpoint
5 modeled for the bridges under consideration.

6 This would be more the simple
7 structure, box girder. It could be steel. It could
8 be concrete. It's somewhat of a streamlined
9 structure. A lot of the longer crossings are done
10 with this configuration today. They're very
11 versatile. They easily have spans approaching 400
12 feet. Actually, probably the best example of a box
13 girder structure like this is the bridge adjacent to
14 the Zakim Bridge. The Storrow Connector is of this
15 genre of bridge.

16 This is what it would look like from
17 Amesbury looking to the east. This is what it would
18 look like in this modeled view we have from Moseley
19 looking to the west. And this is what it would be
20 looking like from the Chain Bridge, looking to the
21 west.

22 One thing you'll notice is that given
23 the impacts of the navigation and our desire not to
24 have any impact on the existing navigable ways and the

1 channels which are up there, you'll notice the pier
2 configurations of the bridges -- and, actually,
3 they're fairly consistent -- are different. The
4 existing bridge has four piers in the water. And all
5 of the bridges that we have in the study right now are
6 three piers in the water.

7 The center pier is actually on the
8 shoaling area, the high area, where there are rocks at
9 low tide. And the other piers are actually behind the
10 existing shoreline piers that are in the river today.
11 And, actually, it even widens up the channels in that
12 area for boating outside in excess of the current
13 channels which exist today and actually have a very
14 negligible effect or more likely an improved impact on
15 flows of the river.

16 Because we're looking at everything
17 right now and we're just centralizing, we did look at
18 a cable-stay in terms of what that would look like out
19 there. This is the view from Amesbury. It's very
20 dramatic. It has the larger towers. This is what it
21 would look like from Moseley Woods. And this is what
22 the structure could look like from the Chain Bridge.

23 We have a -- essentially, it's a newer
24 bridge type to the U.S. There's a couple of them

1 under construction. There's one under construction
2 down in Hartford, Connecticut, right now on 95. It's
3 known as an extradosed structure. In some ways, it
4 looks like a cable bridge, but the tower is only about
5 half the height. And instead of supporting the
6 roadway deck in a suspension type of configuration, it
7 actually is using -- it has prestressed cables pulling
8 the bridge elements together, the separate elements
9 together, and pulling them towards to the pier.

10 As I said, it's a newer type bridge.
11 There's a couple of them under construction in the
12 country right now. They're used more extensively
13 overseas right now. But it has a lot of advantages in
14 certain areas. And so we're looking at this type of
15 structure, also.

16 This one has a single tower. This is
17 the Amesbury view. Once again, there's the Moseley
18 view. And, this is what the view would be from the
19 Chain Bridge.

20 Then we have a double extradosed
21 structure. This one actually has two sets of towers.
22 This is one we're looking at also.

23 Once again, that Amesbury view. I'm
24 not sure why our people made it look like a summer

1 storm in this one, but that's what it kind of looks
2 like. Here's the view from Moseley. As you can see,
3 the towers are lower. It has a different look and
4 feel to it. And these are early modeling efforts. As
5 we'll be looking at these, we'll actually refine the
6 level of model so they'll look actually more like a
7 real structure versus a structure which is kind of
8 dropped into the environment.

9 And this is what the double extradosed
10 would look like from the Chain Bridge.

11 And there's also a type of steel
12 structure known as a network tied arch. To a certain
13 degree, it's a modern version of a through truss,
14 which is basically the structure which is out there
15 right now. The closest example to this bridge is on
16 I-95 in Providence, Rhode Island. That bridge was
17 opened up for traffic about two years ago. The size
18 is very close to the size configuration that we have
19 here. So, the arch sections are 400-foot and it has
20 eight lanes of traffic on it, which is very similar to
21 what we would have here.

22 But, once again, this is the Amesbury
23 view. Here's the view from Moseley. And this one is
24 showing -- it's a little different. And, actually,

1 what you see is a steel center section with what's
2 shown right here is concrete or steel painted gray
3 approach spans on either side. Basically, a bridge
4 like this typically would all be steel and so the
5 girders approaching it and the sides would be steel,
6 also. So, it looks a little stark and unusual with
7 just the painted green structure in the center.

8 So, that's where we are in terms of
9 some of the different options for bridges that we're
10 looking at. And we're spending a lot of time on that
11 right now as we're finalizing our second phase of
12 screening to zero in on exactly which of the highway
13 alignments we're going to be proceeding with and make
14 sure it matches and meets up with the actual bridge
15 structure types that we're looking at for the primary
16 river crossing.

17 From our public process, you know, we
18 had our earlier meetings in the spring with the
19 government entities. We had our MEPA briefing in
20 June. We had our stakeholders meeting in December.
21 And this is the follow-up. And we're starting to pull
22 together our screening process, which is why we wanted
23 to get back out again. We, also, have basically
24 committed ourselves to meet quarterly, so our next

1 meeting will be in April. I think we're generally
2 going to swing back between the towns to make it
3 easier for people. So I'm not sure whether it will be
4 in Salisbury next time or Newburyport. It most likely
5 will be different than Amesbury.

6 I'll go through our project schedule.
7 You know, we're well into our project now. And
8 jumping down towards, you know, in step three, we
9 filed our Environmental Notification Form in June. We
10 had a meeting, received our -- what's known as the
11 MEPA certificate, which defines the formal scope of
12 the project, which we're analyzing right now.

13 We're into a process now which is a
14 long bit of work for us to do, which is what we've
15 been briefing you on tonight, which is the
16 alternatives analysis. The alternatives analysis will
17 be written up into a draft document. And that draft
18 document will be available for full public review in
19 the fall. And so we will be out once again in April
20 and most likely will be out again in July. And,
21 probably, the fall meeting will be right around the
22 time when this document is out for review.

23 Once we have circulated that, received
24 the formal comments back from agencies, and entities,

1 and residents, we'll take comments, update the
2 document reflecting those comments, and we'll file the
3 Final EIR, the Environmental Impact Report, in the
4 spring of 2011. In the meantime, separately, we will
5 have been working on the federal process, which shifts
6 away from the combined document early on to, as Joe
7 Freeman told you, it ends up with a Finding of No
8 Significant Impact. It lets you go through the
9 process on a separate path. But the state path
10 follows in terms of the EIR.

11 We're expecting to receive the
12 approvals from both the Massachusetts and from the
13 federal level during the summer of 2011. We'll
14 finalize design issues based upon the approvals and
15 what we need to do, follow it up with a design public
16 hearing in the fall of 2011. At that same time, the
17 process for procuring what is anticipated right now to
18 be a design build contract to do this job, that
19 solicitation will start looking for qualified
20 construction and design teams. And we'll be looking
21 at going through a process to select qualified
22 proposals of proposers. Generally, you look for
23 anywhere from three to six within that timeframe. And
24 once that list is created, the request for formal

1 proposals will go out in the spring of 2012, hopefully
2 with a contractor on board sometime in late fall, and
3 followed up by construction in the start of the
4 winter, early 2013, with the wrap-up of the project
5 being by June of 2016.

6 So that finishes up our presentation
7 for tonight. I'll give it back up to Mr. O'Dowd to
8 get into our question and answer portion of this
9 meeting.

10 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thanks very much,
11 Mike. Thank you, Joe.

12 Before we get to the questions and
13 answers, just a couple of things. As Mike stated,
14 this is intended to be delivered as a design build
15 project. And, as such, the responsibility of PB and
16 their team is to bring this to a level of design, a
17 preliminary level of design, that will have gone
18 through the regulatory and permitting agencies, have
19 been permitted. However, the design, the final design
20 and construction of the project, will be performed by
21 a DB team.

22 And, one of the screening criteria that
23 Joe and Mike both described to you is how right-of-way
24 is impacted during the -- not only during the

1 assessment of the various alternatives being
2 considered, but also the requirements for a contractor
3 to have certain rights of entry and certain rights-of-
4 way during the construction. So, with that, I'd like
5 to ask Michael Sheehan to present to you MassHighway's
6 -- excuse me -- MassDOT's requirements for right-of-
7 way acquisition.

8 MICHAEL SHEEHAN: Good evening. My
9 name is Mike Sheehan and I represent the Right-of-Way
10 Bureau of the Massachusetts Department of
11 Transportation - Highway Division.

12 The Right-of-Way Bureau is responsible
13 for acquiring all of the necessary rights in private
14 and public lands for the design, construction, and
15 implementation of this project.

16 Affected property owners will be
17 contacted by personnel from the Right of Way Bureau or
18 consultants representing the Massachusetts Department
19 of Transportation - Highway Division. The procedures
20 used must comply with state and federal regulations
21 governing the acquisition process.

22 The current design plan indicates that
23 a yet to be determined number of fee takings and
24 permanent easements may or will be required. Other

1 areas also will require temporary construction
2 easements.

3 Affected property owners' rights are
4 protected under Massachusetts General Laws, primarily
5 Chapter 79. If a project is receiving federal funds,
6 the property owners' rights are further defined under
7 Title III of the Real Property Acts of 1970 as
8 amended.

9 I will be happy to answer any general
10 questions regarding right-of-way activities during the
11 open forum for questions, and I will be available
12 after this public hearing for any specific questions
13 you may have.

14 Thank you.

15 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you very much,
16 Mike.

17 So, as mentioned at the beginning of
18 the meeting, the intent here is to solicit as much of
19 the input from the general public as possible. And as
20 we are just developing various alternatives right now,
21 I can't say for sure that we'll be able to answer all
22 of your questions, but we will make an attempt to
23 address them to the best of our ability.

24 Once again, if there is anybody in the

1 audience tonight who would like to fill in the mail-in
2 comment sheet that's at the back table, or if you'd
3 like to hand it to any of the MassDOT representatives
4 here tonight, myself or Stephanie Boundy at the back,
5 please do so.

6 Finally, before we ask the public for
7 any questions, it is typical for us to ask if there
8 are any elected officials in the audience who would
9 like to stand -- I would ask that you please stand,
10 state your name, and please ask your question. And, I
11 would also ask, please, come to the podium here so
12 that we'll have an opportunity to be able to have your
13 comments listed in the transcript.

14 So, if there's any officials in the
15 audience tonight, please stand. Yes, sir?

16 COUNCILOR ERIC KIMBALL: How are you
17 doing, folks? Eric Kimball, City of Amesbury,
18 District 6 Councilor.

19 You mentioned in your presentation that
20 the construction would begin in the winter of 2013.
21 You also mentioned something about shoring up the
22 existing structure prior to the construction. I was
23 wondering about the timeline on that and how that
24 would affect the traffic flows prior to I assume the

1 full construction in 2013?

2 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Okay. Do you have
3 anything else, Councilor?

4 COUNCILOR ERIC KIMBALL: That's it.

5 MODERATOR O'DOWD: That's it. Okay.

6 To answer the Councilman's question,
7 MassDOT has been undergoing routine inspections of the
8 bridge regularly right now. And, as you're all aware,
9 there was a fair amount of work going on last year
10 within the river off of barges and aerial lifts. So,
11 we are maintaining this regularly. We do not
12 anticipate the need to have to do any temporary
13 shoring unless something to our surprise is found or
14 inspected in future inspections or future routine
15 inspections.

16 The project is intended to begin in
17 very early 2013, as Mike alluded to. That is the
18 schedule right now as it stands. But the first phase
19 of construction would be to try and implement as much
20 of the permanent construction so that we'll be able to
21 have an opportunity to divert all of the traffic
22 during construction onto a proposed structure.

23 So, we don't foresee the need for
24 temporary shoring at this time. But, certainly, it's

1 incumbent upon us right now to keep this operating
2 safely for all motor vehicles through not only now in
3 the design, but also through the construction period.

4 I would ask if there's no other elected
5 officials --

6 COUNCILOR BOB CRONIN: Thank you. Bob
7 Cronin, Newburyport City Councilor, Ward 3.

8 Is there any overlap in this proposed
9 project with the Hines Bridge project at all or do you
10 anticipate that because the Hines Bridge closure is
11 certainly a lifeline between Amesbury and Newburyport?
12 So, looking at that for traffic.

13 MODERATOR O'DOWD: At this point, we do
14 not anticipate based upon the schedule of which I'm
15 not in possession of, but my understanding is the
16 schedule for the Hines Bridge replacement would not
17 interfere with the future construction of this
18 project.

19 COUNCILOR BOB CRONIN: Thank you.

20 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Yes?

21 KAREN SOLSTAD: I'm Karen Solstad and
22 I'm on the Planning Board here in Amesbury.

23 The gentleman from Newburyport asked my
24 primary question. The secondary question on -- you've

1 talked about traffic going from three lanes to four
2 and the congestion and the chaos that causes. As
3 you're working on this, would there be any way -- I've
4 been commuting on that stretch of highway for 25 years
5 I've been here -- is there any way to put more signs
6 south of the bridge to indicate the narrowing of the
7 road? I think there's like one small sign now. And
8 once and a while when I take 93 they have big signs.
9 And it is horrible coming up 95 when there's traffic
10 and it goes down to three lanes because you have all
11 the traffic merging on from Newburyport and it's --
12 I'm surprised that there aren't more accidents there.
13 So, my request, to keep us safe while you work on this
14 project, is to make it more aware to people that
15 there's a reduction of traffic.

16 And thank you for keeping us updated.

17 STENOGRAPHER: Could you spell your
18 last name for the record?

19 KAREN SOLSTAD: S-O-L-S-T-A-D. The
20 first name is Karen, K-A-R-E-N.

21 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you very much.

22 During the construction, it will be
23 well-signed to inform people, to notify people of any
24 changes in the roadway configurations, certainly if

1 there's going to be any impacts to the travel lanes at
2 specific hours. So, we'll keep the public up-to-date
3 on the schedule and also for various lane closures.

4 In the interim, I'll bring back your
5 comment to our district traffic engineer and see if
6 there is a possibility or see if there's a need for
7 putting new signage or increased signage to alert
8 people to the constriction from the four-lane to
9 three-lane.

10 Yes, sir?

11 GANSON PURCELL: Ganson Purcell, Main
12 Street, Amesbury. And, Mr. Recorder, I'll give you a
13 card so you'll have the spelling of my name.

14 I'd like to thank you, gentlemen, once
15 again, for another lucid presentation. I attended
16 your appearance before the Amesbury Con Comm back in
17 the spring. It was very helpful then, too.

18 My issue has to do with the volume of
19 high-speed commuter traffic that comes through
20 Amesbury. It's been a problem for the Town for years.
21 We have a traffic commission that's been very active.
22 A longtime member of that traffic commission was
23 Officer Glenn Chaput. And I don't think he's here. I
24 hope I didn't butcher his last name -- who once said,

1 "The solution to Amesbury's traffic problems is an I-
2 495 to 95 south connector."

3 When I heard about this \$300 million
4 project, I suggested to our Senator Baddour, it might
5 be a good idea to include it. He felt that was a good
6 idea and passed it onto Ms. Paiewonsky of the DOT.

7 MODERATOR O'DOWD: That's correct.

8 GANSON PURCELL: I hope I pronounced
9 her name correctly. She said, "Great idea." We'd
10 even done some preliminary research on it. However,
11 it will not be a part of this construction program.
12 We'll get to it right after. Well, the political
13 reality is that once we've spent the \$300 million here
14 in the northeast section in Massachusetts, we're not
15 going to see another dime of highway money for many
16 decades.

17 So, my request is, once again, to
18 consider the I-495 to 95 south connector. It could be
19 very simply done with a small footprint over this
20 golden triangle.

21 Also, a query for you. I understand,
22 I've heard, that there will be allotted 5 percent
23 mitigation funds to each town affected by this
24 project. And if that intelligence is correct, that's

1 some \$15 million for the town of Amesbury. I don't
2 know whether you can confirm that or not.

3 The other question I have, and a couple
4 of citizens have queried Senator Kennedy's office
5 before his untimely death and they never got back to
6 us because they were otherwise occupied, but in the
7 charter or requirements for interstate to interstate
8 intersections, could it be that four-way on-/off-ramps
9 are mandated that could impact the project?

10 Thank you.

11 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you for your
12 comments, Mr. Purcell. And, Mr. Purcell has submitted
13 his comments in writing previously. And, having been
14 part of the discussion with Administrator Paiewonsky
15 relative to the 95 to 495 connection, it cannot be
16 incorporated into the design nor the construction of
17 this project, but our Administrator is committed to
18 looking into the feasibility of that at a time
19 subsequent to the construction of this project. The
20 funding -- and it is beyond the scope that's available
21 within this project right now.

22 With regards to the comments, the
23 intelligence you received on the 5 percent mitigation,
24 I'm not aware of that. So, I don't want to give any

1 high expectations or hopes to any of the adjacent
2 communities that there's a 5 percent mitigation coming
3 back to you. That is not the case. We will work with
4 the neighboring towns to make sure there's no adverse
5 impacts during construction to the best of our
6 ability, but there will be no 5 percent mitigation
7 made available.

8 Questions?

9 WILLIAM HARRIS: Good evening. My name
10 is William R. Harris. I live at 56 Lime Street in
11 Newburyport. I'm a retired attorney. I have done
12 litigation under the National Environmental Policy Act
13 and MEPA and I've done a lot of cost benefit analyses
14 of major projects for the Rand Corporation in
15 California for 20 years.

16 I have three sets of comments. The
17 first is on some of the economic and financial
18 consequences of this project; the second on public
19 health and safety; the third on long-range
20 environmental opportunities.

21 So, first, on economic and financial
22 impacts of this extraordinarily large and needed
23 project. Even if the Hines Bridge is not under repair
24 at the same time that this project is underway, you

1 start with a bridge with only three lanes on each
2 side. You don't have an extra lane. You may have
3 lane closures for when you need to use the existing
4 bridge during the extended construction of the new
5 bridge, the six lanes if it's on the east side, the
6 four lanes on each side if it's the east-west choice.
7 So, there are likely to be indirect impacts, even if
8 everything goes well -- increased density and
9 potentially congestion on the Hines Bridge, which is
10 just one lane in each direction, and on the Route 1
11 Bridge, especially in the summer, when we're talking
12 May to September when you're getting traffic of 50 to
13 70, maybe more than 73,000 vehicles.

14 So, our infrastructure is stressed, in
15 part, because the nation is undergoing this massive
16 public works activity, partly for economic
17 stimulation, but partly because the infrastructure of
18 the nation needs investment. So, I believe we are
19 likely to have economic consequences, especially in
20 the summer months, in May to September, especially in
21 June and July, sometimes August, even if things go
22 well. And, if you have a major accident or an
23 unexpected closure, it could be worse. And so I
24 believe there really is a need for mitigation. And

1 mitigation will reduce the environmental consequences.
2 If you have traffic backed up and cars polluting up
3 and down the Hines Bridge between Newburyport and
4 Amesbury or the Route 1 Bridge, if you have traffic
5 coming south on the Route 1 Bridge trying to get off
6 at Merrimack Street and turn left where we have
7 inadequate signal systems, you will have environmental
8 pollution from the indirect effects of this massive
9 project.

10 And so I believe it will remediate the
11 environmental impacts to have a mitigation project
12 that includes improving the signal system, the signage
13 system, and possibly water taxi services. If this
14 project does cause congestion and economic harm, there
15 are opportunities for trip avoidance by having water
16 taxi services. We have several boat operators in
17 Newburyport that would like to do that. One just
18 applied for a summer ferry service between Newburyport
19 and the Salisbury Beach State Reservation and was
20 turned down by the Public Access Board. Now, that's
21 430 families there that could be to Newburyport
22 without taking a bridge. And they had reasons. It
23 was a commercial boat. But I think it would be
24 beneficial to look at the congestion and financial

1 impacts of having this massive project, even if
2 everything goes well.

3 Then you have to consider that the
4 Hines Bridge project may, in fact, parallel this
5 project. It's just life is like that in these large
6 projects, which have major review processes and
7 sometimes unexpected delays. So, I hope that a
8 mitigation program is put in place because it should
9 in the end save money and it should save the
10 businesses that could be harmed not just in northern
11 Essex County, but in southern New Hampshire. When I
12 go to shop at Sam's Club, about two-thirds of the cars
13 there in southern New Hampshire have Massachusetts
14 plates. So this affects southern New Hampshire and
15 northern Massachusetts economically.

16 Now, let me turn to public health and
17 safety. I used to work on nuclear issues at the Rand
18 Corporation including radiological issues and
19 emergency evacuation for some projects. It's a matter
20 of public record that since at least a year ago that
21 Al-Qaeda specifically targeted the Seabrook Nuclear
22 Plant. I consider this a safe operating plan with
23 very low risk, generally speaking, of having any kind
24 of an accident. But if we have a terrorist threat

1 where people would intentionally cause radiological
2 damage, I believe it's important as part of the
3 environmental review of this project to consider the
4 low probability, but very high consequence, of an
5 evacuation necessity because of an intentional act
6 that would put our region at risk. And so I would ask
7 you to model for your east option, and your east-west
8 option, and any other options you're considering, how
9 the process of construction with the infrastructure
10 outage during construction, and then the long-term
11 consequences upon our evacuation plans. I believe in
12 the long-run there's an improved safety for our region
13 by having a higher capacity bridge, but how we get
14 from here to there needs to be analyzed because it
15 could be a risk to evacuation plans during these
16 projects.

17 Finally, I'd like to move to the issue
18 of long-term environmental opportunities. I believe -
19 - I don't know these bridge configurations well. I
20 just heard about them tonight. But my understanding
21 is that the east bridge option provides six new lanes
22 to be built on the east side of the existing bridge
23 first, and then the build-out of the extra two lanes
24 on the west side. It strikes me that this leaves some

1 additional lane capacity from the pre-existing bridge
2 that might be considered for a slower speed or very
3 slow speed opportunity for pedestrians, for bicycling,
4 and for low-speed vehicles that are simply unsuitable
5 to mix with the high speeds of interstate highways.
6 So, if there are alternative energy systems, if we're
7 thinking 50 years in the future, we may well have
8 vehicles that operate at lower speeds and it's
9 possible that the east bridge option would provide the
10 potential for a corridor that would allow these slower
11 speed uses going north and south. And I hope you
12 consider that in the environmental impact review. The
13 east-west option also appears to provide opportunity
14 for pedestrians, bicyclists, and low-speed alternate
15 energy vehicles going north-south.

16 Further, if you take a long-term view,
17 if you're looking at the consequences of this project
18 30 to 50 years out, one ought to also include the
19 possible opportunities for high-speed rail using some
20 of the extra capacity that won't be utilized with the
21 new bridge configuration, especially the east-west
22 option leaves a corridor in the middle. I would just
23 note that in the last month, China has proposed a
24 high-speed rail system for over 117 cities. They have

1 the resources to contract with U.S., Japan, and
2 European firms with the latest technology. And this
3 is a more energy-efficient way to move people. And
4 you have an opportunity, and I hope you will consider
5 the potential long-term environmental benefits with
6 either the east option or the east-west option to
7 provide a potential corridor to retain the public
8 right-of-ways for environmental opportunities in the
9 future.

10 Thank you.

11 STENOGRAPHER: Could you spell your
12 name for the record?

13 WILLIAM HARRIS: William R. Harris, H-
14 A-R-R-I-S.

15 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you.

16 I would ask that you please, because
17 you have a number of comments there that I feel
18 require a response to -- I don't know that I'll be
19 able to respond to all of them tonight. So, I'd ask
20 that you place them in writing and send them to me so
21 that we can respond to you more formally.

22 But what I can address quickly is the
23 three points that you mentioned. First, relative to
24 the anticipated construction of the Hines, based upon

1 the schedule of the design build team that was
2 selected, they are anticipated or the schedule will
3 require their completion of that project before this
4 one is actually let out for bid. So, we don't
5 anticipate there to be impacts ongoing during the
6 construction phase.

7 With regards to impacts, congestion,
8 during construction of the Whittier Bridge project,
9 the intent here in any of the alternatives that we've
10 been discussing as a team, and also presenting to the
11 public, have shown that the -- we intend to maintain
12 three lanes of traffic during all phases of
13 construction, certainly during the peak hour
14 movements. There may be times during the evening
15 hours or during nighttime hours when more heavier work
16 is going on that we may be required to reduce by one
17 or two lanes in either the northbound or southbound
18 lane. But during the peak hours of traffic movement,
19 we will have three lanes available in each direction
20 to help alleviate any potential for traffic diverting
21 to either the local communities or the small business
22 neighborhoods.

23 With regards to the economic, public
24 health, safety, and the long-range opportunities,

1 those three points will be fully addressed in the
2 Draft Environmental Impact Report that will be filed
3 in the fall of 2010. So, I would ask that, once
4 again, submit those comments to me. But, I can assure
5 you that all of those that you mentioned tonight will
6 be fully evaluated in the preferred alternative.
7 We'll certainly go into great detail explaining any of
8 the impacts that are associated with those forms.

9 Thank you.

10 If there are any other -- sure. Come
11 on over.

12 JAY HARRIS: We're in the general
13 public section, aren't we?

14 MODERATOR O'DOWD: That's fine. Are
15 there any other elected officials in the audience? If
16 not, it's open for the public.

17 JAY HARRIS: Should I come to --

18 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Sure. Please. Just
19 so the audience can hear you.

20 JAY HARRIS: My name is Jay Harris, no
21 relation, I don't think. I have several questions,
22 but I'll try to be brief.

23 First, this feasibility of
24 rehabilitation report that you mentioned, will that be

1 available for the public?

2 MODERATOR O'DOWD: It will become
3 available to the public once the design team and also
4 the regulatory agencies have had an opportunity to
5 review it. So right now it's in a draft form.

6 JAY HARRIS: So how do we get a copy?

7 MODERATOR O'DOWD: So, it is not
8 available for the public to view right now.

9 JAY HARRIS: And when it does become
10 available, how would we get a copy of that?

11 MODERATOR O'DOWD: It can be made
12 available through the Freedom of Information Act.

13 JAY HARRIS: What about from the DOT?
14 I mean that actually means going to court.

15 MODERATOR O'DOWD: No. No, it just
16 means filing a request. You file a request with our
17 office and then we make it available.

18 JAY HARRIS: Okay. The traffic volume
19 that you were showing, just to get it clear, the way I
20 interpreted it, your peak volumes were weekends, July
21 and August, that's 70,000 vehicles. Is that right?

22 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Mm hum.

23 JAY HARRIS: So, do you have any idea -
24 - and, at that level, the level of service was E?

1 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Without adding a
2 lane, the level of service by 2030 will become level
3 of service E.

4 JAY HARRIS: It will become. Do you
5 live around here?

6 MODERATOR O'DOWD: I travel this route
7 every day and have done so for 20 years.

8 JAY HARRIS: Okay. So you know
9 weekends, July and August, the traffic gets backed up
10 --

11 MODERATOR O'DOWD: I'm very familiar.

12 JAY HARRIS: -- to the Hampton tolls.

13 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Very familiar.

14 JAY HARRIS: And that's not going to
15 change with anything that happens with the bridge.

16 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Actually, the
17 Hampton tolls are going barrier free tolling starting
18 May of this year.

19 JAY HARRIS: Do you have any idea how
20 the numbers you were showing compare to say 128
21 between 93 and 95, which is also three lanes in each
22 direction?

23 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: I'm not sure what
24 your question is, sir.

1 JAY HARRIS: You were saying the bridge
2 handles, on the weekends, at peak times, 70,000 cars a
3 day. It's three lanes in each direction.

4 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Correct.

5 JAY HARRIS: And three lanes in each
6 direction is what you have on 128 between 93 and 95.

7 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Okay.

8 JAY HARRIS: How does that compare? I
9 mean you're showing a lot of numbers, but it's hard to
10 interpret them.

11 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Well, we didn't do
12 a direct comparison because the projects are not
13 linked.

14 JAY HARRIS: But 128 takes many times
15 the vehicular -- the volume of traffic that the
16 Whittier takes, I assume.

17 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: There is a longer
18 peak of traffic there. One of the unique things about
19 this corridor is that it's driven by basically --
20 there are two separate peaks. There is the weekly
21 peaks during the normal commute on Monday to Thursday,
22 and then there is the peaks which are driven by the
23 traffic along the corridor for vacationing and
24 especially beach impact during the summer. So, we

1 have those two conflicting peaks in terms of our
2 design.

3 JAY HARRIS: Do you remember what the
4 weekday peaks were?

5 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: I don't have it --

6 JAY HARRIS: But they're less than the
7 70.

8 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: It's less than the
9 total volumes. But, you know, you've got to design
10 the highway to work at its peak or it's not going to
11 work.

12 JAY HARRIS: Well, my concern was,
13 basically, the bridge seems to obviously suffer from,
14 you know, 50 years of underfunded maintenance. I mean
15 it's in bad shape.

16 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Mm hum.

17 JAY HARRIS: And, going forward, as we
18 say now, do you see any reason that's going to change,
19 meaning isn't it worth considering repairing five
20 bridges or ten bridges rather than replacing one
21 bridge and not touching the others? You're always
22 going to be underfunded. You're always going to be,
23 you know, behind on your maintenance schedules. And
24 maybe we should be looking at repairing lots of

1 bridges rather than replacing one bridge.

2 MODERATOR O'DOWD: It's true that the
3 bridges, not only statewide, but as Mr. Harris
4 mentioned earlier, it's the infrastructure has
5 suffered throughout the country.

6 JAY HARRIS: Yeah.

7 MODERATOR O'DOWD: There's been a lack
8 of maintenance on all of the infrastructure,
9 specifically bridges and highways. And one of the key
10 points behind the program, the Accelerated Bridge
11 Program, is the Governor had made available through
12 bond \$3 billion. That \$3 billion, although it sounds
13 like a very high number, it is being distributed
14 through 351 communities and towns throughout the
15 Commonwealth. MassDOT has over 5,000 bridges on its
16 inventory, many of which have suffered through this
17 deferred maintenance. But our intent with this
18 program is to address those structurally deficient
19 bridges now. And we are concentrating on developing a
20 maintenance program that will help prevent that from
21 happening again in the future.

22 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: If I could add, one
23 of the particular issues with this type of bridge is
24 that -- I use the word non-redundant structure in the

1 discussion points. It's an older style. It's a
2 riveted gusseted plate design, which makes a lot of
3 its current ratings and overall strength somewhat
4 indeterminate at times. There's a very similar bridge
5 to this one, the Lake Champlain Bridge, which they
6 decided was so poorly deteriorated that they had to do
7 an immediate closure and they demoed the bridge.

8 This, without being alarmist, this is
9 the same type of bridge, I35W, that collapsed a year-
10 and-a-half ago. It's in that family of bridges which
11 are no longer being built due to the type of bridge
12 they are. And they're especially susceptible to
13 deterioration with all the exposed steel elements in
14 them and connection points, and the overlap connection
15 points by the riveted braced construction that they
16 have where the rigors of winter, and salt, and the
17 corrosion environment, as well as being over a
18 brackish body of water, have basically taken this
19 bridge and, you know, our report that we just recently
20 submitted to the state to review, has found that this
21 bridge is beyond the point where it makes any economic
22 sense to rehabilitate it.

23 And that's why -- that's the position
24 that the team has. And the state is reviewing that

1 consequence right now and seeing whether they agree or
2 not.

3 JAY HARRIS: Well, I tried to get a
4 copy of the inspection report to kind of go over it
5 with an engineer to sort of confirm what you just
6 said. And your Department sent me pages like this.

7 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Well, Mr. Harris
8 made a --

9 JAY HARRIS: It didn't make it very
10 helpful to --

11 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Mr. Harris made a
12 statement about security. And after 9/11, Federal
13 Highway mandated that all the DOTs implement security
14 measures associated with their transportation
15 structures so that, basically, the reports and details
16 of a bridge and where its weakest point may be is not
17 public knowledge. So it's not meant to be a guidebook
18 for attacks on infrastructure within the United
19 States. So, as frustrating as it may be, it's done
20 under the guise of keeping us all safer and making
21 sure that information is not freely available for the
22 people that we don't want to have it. And that's the
23 kind of quandary that we're in. And I appreciate your
24 frustration, but that's the reason behind it.

1 JAY HARRIS: Well, for example, there's
2 a section on painting. That's all blacked out. Is
3 there some security reason that that would be --

4 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Are there specific
5 comments that you have? Let me ask you that. Because
6 as Mike pointed out, it's something that we take
7 extremely important in how much information we're able
8 to divulge on critical infrastructure. And, certainly
9 this being on I-95, which is a regional corridor, it
10 falls within that classification. Our ability to
11 divulge -- to give out information is limited.

12 JAY HARRIS: Well, specifically, I
13 wanted to know what damage was above the roadway that
14 would necessitate closing the roadway down to repair
15 it. And there is one line that seemed to address that
16 here, just one sentence. It says, "Truss members
17 above the deck," and then the next six words are
18 blacked out, "are generally in satisfactory
19 condition." And that was a specific question I had
20 asked. And it seems the words that were going to
21 answer my question were intentionally blacked out. So
22 I just wonder if I came down to your office maybe I
23 could get a less redacted copy.

24 MODERATOR O'DOWD: It very likely won't

1 be any less redacted, no.

2 JAY HARRIS: Okay.

3 MODERATOR O'DOWD: I mean I'd be happy
4 to sit down and discuss with you the reasoning behind
5 why MassDOT is making recommendations to replace the
6 Whittier. There are members that require immediate
7 attention. Now, certainly, MassDOT went out and made
8 those repairs as needed to ensure ourselves safe
9 traffic moving forward for the 73,000 or so vehicles
10 that are using it on an annual basis, or, excuse me,
11 on a daily basis.

12 JAY HARRIS: On weekends in July and
13 August.

14 MODERATOR O'DOWD: On weekends and in
15 July and August. But, there still lies a number of
16 connections, deck connections, detailings, that need
17 to be addressed and can only be safely addressed by
18 replacement.

19 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: I think one other -
20 - and I know you're concerned about -- well, you've
21 made a couple of mentions about concern about the
22 traffic volumes and the potential or the need for the
23 lane to the traffic volumes. If you took that venture
24 off the table, which is not off the table, and looked

1 at the bridge, and the fact that it does not have a
2 shoulder to the high-speed side nor a breakdown lane,
3 that adds dramatically to the roadway geometry
4 deficiencies and safety impacts which directly results
5 in all of the dots you saw all over that plan showing
6 a high level of accidents on the bridge itself. The
7 bridge is too narrow for the current volume of
8 traffic, never mind that we're looking in the out
9 years and the need to -- because if we're building a
10 bridge, you build it for the out years. If you build
11 it, you build it for the out years. If we're looking
12 at no more traffic on that bridge, we'd be building a
13 new bridge with three lanes and the appropriate
14 shoulders to make it safe, which means that you
15 couldn't salvage the existing bridge. You'd be
16 talking a new bridge regardless.

17 So, it's a second question in terms of
18 the lane count, as opposed to the need to replace it
19 due to the current structural condition that it's in,
20 and the need to add the appropriate safety shoulders
21 so the bridge is safe for the motoring public on a
22 daily basis with the weekly traffic as it is today.

23 JAY HARRIS: Also, we're living in a
24 part of the country where, if you had that attitude,

1 you would tear down all of Newburyport because more
2 than half the housing stock is from the 19th and 18th
3 centuries and earlier. If you had that same approach,
4 you'd probably tear down the Brooklyn Bridge and the
5 Manhattan Bridge. You could tear down a good
6 percentage of the infrastructure of this country.
7 Just because something's not built to the standards of
8 2010 doesn't mean we have to knock it down. But, I
9 don't want to take up anymore time.

10 But, on the first question though, when
11 was that -- do you have any idea when that feasibility
12 report will be available?

13 MODERATOR O'DOWD: When the review of
14 it, by not only the team, but also by the MassDOT
15 engineering staff have an opportunity to look at it,
16 review it, and finalize it, then it can be made
17 available to the public through the Freedom of
18 Information.

19 JAY HARRIS: So you don't have an
20 answer?

21 MODERATOR O'DOWD: I cannot give you a
22 timeframe right now on that.

23 JAY HARRIS: Okay.

24 MODERATOR O'DOWD: But if you want to

1 follow up with me at a later date, I'll be happy to
2 let you know then.

3 JAY HARRIS: Okay. Thank you.

4 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you, Mr.
5 Harris.

6 Yes, sir?

7 JIM LUKENS: Jim Lukens, resident of
8 Amesbury, Main Street. And, my question I think is a
9 relatively quicker one.

10 With regards to noise abatement, I was
11 wondering if any thought has been given to using the
12 type of wall sound barriers along the highway
13 approaching the bridge -- now, I'm not talking about a
14 walled bridge here -- particularly on the southbound
15 lane, Amesbury side, where the roadway abuts a number
16 of residences? I know that there are barriers in use
17 along 95, less here 95 than in other places in the
18 country. But I wonder if any thought has been given
19 to use of those barriers.

20 Or maybe you can simply answer, the
21 current bridge is very noisy for Main Street
22 residents. Will the new bridge be considerably
23 quieter?

24 Thank you.

1 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: That type of
2 structure, due to the open joints between all the
3 spans, is a noisy structure. And with the
4 deteriorated condition of this, some of the expansion
5 joints are not as tight as a new bridge that would be
6 built. Any of the new bridges would be much quieter
7 than the existing structure and you wouldn't hear that
8 pounding that you hear late at night from heavy trucks
9 going over it as they hit the individual expansion
10 joints. It's characteristic of the bridge type. It's
11 even worsened by the fact of the current age of that
12 bridge. The newer structures would not be emanating
13 that same type of sound that you're hearing today.

14 JIM LUKENS: Have you given any thought
15 to the sound wall barriers that I've seen in use
16 elsewhere?

17 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We're going to do
18 that as part of the Environmental Impact Report that
19 Joe mentioned earlier and that Joe is working on.
20 That's one of the reasons why we have -- the team has
21 gone out and evaluated, done a noise assessment along
22 this corridor, developed some of the background noise,
23 run that through the model, and identify whether or
24 not the noise associated with the highway or the

1 future construction of the project would require a
2 sound barrier to be placed. So, it's one of the
3 issues that will be resolved during the filing of the
4 impact report.

5 JIM LUKENS: Thank you.

6 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Yes, sir?

7 DAVID WATSON: My name is David Watson.
8 I'm the executive director of the Massachusetts
9 Bicycle Coalition. Thanks for the opportunity to
10 participate. And it's good to see so many members of
11 the public here who are interested in the project.

12 I'd like to follow up on the first Mr.
13 Harris' comment regarding bicycle and pedestrian
14 accommodations as part of this project. I don't think
15 you have to look very far into the future to see a
16 need for accommodating bicycles and pedestrians here.
17 As one of the slides during the presentation showed,
18 there is already an extensive and growing network of
19 both biking and walking paths and trails and bicycle
20 routes and there are a lot of people here who do ride
21 their bikes.

22 I would say that including bicycle and
23 pedestrian accommodation as part of this project is
24 not simply an amenity, but this is perhaps the only

1 opportunity that currently exists to create a safe way
2 for bicyclists and pedestrians to get across the
3 Merrimack River. And, I would urge you to look very
4 seriously at ways to include that kind of
5 accommodation as part of this project.

6 Thank you.

7 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you, Mr.
8 Watson.

9 Dave and I have worked together on
10 other projects, very well I may add. And during the
11 Environmental Notification Form, when the ENF was out
12 for public comment, there were a number of comments
13 that had come back from not only the public, but also
14 local municipalities regarding that same topic that
15 Dave just mentioned, including how we can improve or
16 perhaps provide pedestrian and bicyclist
17 accommodations where they don't currently exist.

18 It is one of the things that we are
19 evaluating. I've received phone calls and emails
20 regarding this same topic very recently as to what
21 MassDOT is doing to try to improve those conditions.
22 And it is something that MassDOT is very cognizant of.
23 We are certainly trying to move forward in the
24 availability, of making the availability on our

1 transportation facilities more accommodating for not
2 only the motorists, but also for bicyclists,
3 pedestrians.

4 So, we are looking. We are
5 investigating the opportunities including the links
6 between Moseley State Park and Moseley Woods, and also
7 any of the impacts that may be associated with the I-
8 95 widening crossing over the future Ghosts Trail
9 connection just north of 110, and also our ability to
10 be able to create a pedestrian friendly path below the
11 river, adjacent to the south bank along the Merrimack.

12 So, there are opportunities there.
13 And, MassDOT is considering those as part of our
14 preliminary design and will be brought forward in the
15 Environmental Impact Report where a number of the
16 comments that were received on the ENF will be
17 responded to officially in that report.

18 Yes, sir?

19 JIM CHANDLER: Thank you. My name is
20 Jim Chandler. I'm at 417 Main Street in Amesbury.

21 STENOGRAPHER: Can you spell your last
22 name?

23 JIM CHANDLER: C-H-A-N-D-L-E-R.

24 STENOGRAPHER: Thank you.

1 JIM CHANDLER: Yeah, I've got a
2 comment. Whenever I and other people head south on 95
3 and get off to go west on 110, it's a real problem
4 because you have to cut across the eastbound lane of
5 110 and it's very hard to tell, you know, how the
6 traffic is coming heading west on 110. It's
7 dangerous. I know years ago when I was first in
8 Amesbury, there was a -- off of 95 south there was a
9 westbound exit, which now you have to loop around to
10 do it.

11 So, I hope while you're planning the
12 new 95 and widening 95, and I know currently there's a
13 plan to widen 110, but somehow that connection to 110
14 west off 95 south has to be addressed.

15 Thank you.

16 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you.

17 Our ability to be able to improve the
18 connection from 95 onto 110 will be limited because
19 the majority of the work is to not impact the existing
20 ramp structure that exists out there right now. There
21 may be opportunity for us to improve the access and
22 egress from the mainline system onto the ramps, but,
23 beyond that, any improvements that will be realized
24 will be limited.

1 JIM CHANDLER: You don't see the
2 possibility of having a westbound, a new westbound
3 ramp on 95?

4 MODERATOR O'DOWD: No, that's not
5 included as part of the development of this scope of
6 work. It is not.

7 Yes, sir?

8 WAYNE DAVID: My name is Wayne David.
9 And I'm with Eight Towns and the Bay, which is an arm
10 of the state-chartered Mass. Bay's Commission. So
11 I'll be representing the Eight Towns and the Bay. And
12 I have some very serious concerns about the need for
13 four lanes in both directions.

14 At this point in time, I drive that
15 road all the time, weekend traffic and so forth. And
16 there's no back up with three lanes going over the
17 Whittier Bridge. The backup is at the toll bridge in
18 Hampton. That's where all the problem is. I have
19 very serious concerns about expanding that road to
20 four lanes, a four-lane bridge, and four lanes in
21 Salisbury, and Newburyport, Amesbury, etc. I don't
22 think it's necessary. I don't think it's something
23 we're ever going to need. We've got to address the
24 fact that traffic is probably not going to increase in

1 the next 20 years, but probably going to decrease by
2 the cost of fuel. We all know it's going to go up.
3 It's not going to stay at \$2.50, \$2.60 a gallon. It's
4 going to be 3.50, \$4.00, \$4.50, \$5.00 a gallon. We
5 all know this. So, I think this is something that's
6 got to be done. It's got to be taken a good serious
7 look at whether you really need four lanes going north
8 and south.

9 And I also question the accident
10 statistics. I've driven that road and I've never seen
11 any accidents there. It's been going on for 40 years.

12 And I'm also wondering, would somebody
13 be available to make a presentation before Eight Towns
14 and the Bay, at one of our meetings?

15 MODERATOR O'DOWD: You could follow up
16 with Stephanie Boundy at the back of the room tonight.
17 She's our public outreach coordinator. She'll be
18 happy to take your information.

19 WAYNE DAVID: Okay.

20 MODERATOR O'DOWD: And if we can make
21 that presentation available to you, we will do so.

22 WAYNE DAVID: Okay. And the other
23 question was what would happen if a full-blown
24 Environmental Impact Report was required?

1 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We are preparing a
2 full Environmental Impact Report for this project.

3 WAYNE DAVID: How about Environmental
4 Impact -- I'm sorry. I misstated that --
5 Environmental Impact Statement, a full-blown
6 Environmental Impact Statement, which is quite
7 lengthy.

8 MODERATOR O'DOWD: As part of this
9 project, we are coordinating with Federal Highway
10 Administration, who regulates the NEPA process on our
11 behalf.

12 WAYNE DAVID: Uh huh.

13 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We are doing full
14 compliance with NEPA.

15 WAYNE DAVID: Okay. But somebody could
16 still -- you still could be sued for a full-blown
17 Environmental Impact Statement on this?

18 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We'll work with
19 Federal Highway and work within the laws regulating
20 the NEPA. And what we are doing right now is in full
21 compliance with both NEPA and MEPA.

22 WAYNE DAVID: It's an Environmental
23 Impact Report. A full-blown Environmental Impact
24 Statement is quite lengthy.

1 MODERATOR O'DOWD: That's correct. We
2 are doing an environmental assessment of this project.

3 WAYNE DAVID: Okay.

4 MODERATOR O'DOWD: If it is deemed
5 necessary by the NEPA regulations or by Federal
6 Highway that mandates a full Environmental Impact
7 Statement --

8 WAYNE DAVID: It will have to be done.

9 MODERATOR O'DOWD: -- we would -- yeah,
10 we would have to be upheld by that.

11 WAYNE DAVID: Okay.

12 JOE FREEMAN: The differences, they
13 aren't much.

14 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Joe?

15 JOE FREEMAN: If I may, under NEPA,
16 right now we are doing an Environmental --

17 WAYNE DAVID: Assessment.

18 JOE FREEMAN: -- Assessment. Correct.
19 We fully anticipate -- and this is something that we
20 coordinated with Federal Highway. We prepared what's
21 called a Class of Action Determination. Federal
22 Highway concurred that an Environmental Assessment is
23 the proper class of action for this document. It is
24 true that an Environmental Assessment could lead to a

1 decision to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

2 WAYNE DAVID: I see.

3 JOE FREEMAN: That's a decision which
4 would be made by Federal Highway. We fully
5 anticipate, based upon what we project to be the
6 impacts of this project, that we will get what we call
7 that FONSI, that Finding of No Significant Impact,
8 which means no Environmental Impact Statement would
9 need to be prepared.

10 WAYNE DAVID: Could a new six-lane
11 bridge be built with breakdown lanes within the
12 current right-of-way?

13 MODERATOR O'DOWD: As it stands right
14 now, any of the bridge construction that we're
15 proposing or presenting to you tonight, we fully
16 anticipate being able to construct within the right-
17 of-way that is currently owned by the Commonwealth.

18 WAYNE DAVID: Well, very good. Thank
19 you very much.

20 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you.

21 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Just one point on
22 the traffic accident information. All of the traffic
23 information was garnered by reports maintained by the
24 State Police. We got a summary run and then we got a

1 detailed run to further analyze what the actual
2 impacts were of those. So, you know, all of those
3 reports do come from them. And as someone who has
4 traveled this way every working day since 1991, I am
5 very aware of the daily commute issues as well as the
6 weekend commute issues. And, actually, one of those
7 accident pictures on the bridge itself I took because
8 it impacted my commute last summer on the way home and
9 it happened around 6:00 at night. It was typical of
10 the accidents that we read on the bridge, which is
11 directly related to the narrow widths as you're coming
12 off of a fully configured highway to the narrow widths
13 of the bridge and no recovery zones because of the
14 two-foot shoulders.

15 WAYNE DAVID: Well, all the times that
16 I travel that, and I commuted many, many years from
17 here to Boston, Salisbury to Boston, I never had an
18 accident, saw an accident, in that stretch of roadway.
19 That's my input on it.

20 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Okay.

21 WAYNE DAVID: Okay. Thank you very
22 much.

23 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you, Mr.
24 David.

1 The back of the room here. Yes, sir?

2 STEVE COTE: My name is Steve Cote.

3 At the tail end of your presentation,
4 you mentioned that this would be led as a design build
5 project with PB going through other analyses of
6 different types of systems, bridge systems. Is that
7 going to limit what the team would be able to design
8 build based on what you come back?

9 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: What we're going to
10 do is we're going to take the bridge design to 25
11 percent, which pretty much defines the structure
12 types, defines where the piers are and a little bit
13 extra information so that the project can be
14 permitted. The project would be permitted in what
15 they call the box in terms of from an impact
16 standpoint. And, at that point in time, the structure
17 type, which we think will be of interest to the
18 community, will also be determined for the main
19 crossing. And the design build teams will have the
20 ability to get into means and methods, how to deal
21 with accelerated bridge construction opportunities to,
22 you know, further enhance the overall design. But,
23 you know, one of the key issues would be the design
24 structure of the Whittier Bridge would be fully

1 determined and developed to that 25 percent level.
2 Other structures would be developed to 25 percent,
3 but, you know, a lot of it may be performance-based to
4 allow certainly more flexibility with certain things
5 all within the design specifications of AASHTO.

6 STEVE COTE: So, it wouldn't
7 necessarily be -- what's out there had to be steel or
8 had to be concrete?

9 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We will be defining
10 the architectural envelope of it. There may exist an
11 opportunity here where, depending upon the bridge type
12 alternative that is selected, if there's an
13 opportunity that concrete or steel could serve both
14 purposes and meet the architectural envelope and
15 definition that we're striving for, that possibility
16 exists.

17 STEVE COTE: Okay. Thank you.

18 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Sure. Yes, ma'am?

19 LOIS MCNULTY: Hi. My name is Lois
20 McNulty and I'm a retired teacher from Amesbury and
21 I'm a resident of Newburyport.

22 I have two concerns. And one -- the
23 first kind of piggybacks on the previous gentleman on
24 the design of the bridge. I was really surprised when

1 I saw images. And I wish you had put those in the
2 paper because I think you would have filled this place
3 to capacity.

4 So, my first question is when will you
5 decide and how will you decide what's going to replace
6 the beautiful Whittier Bridge, which is one of our
7 region's visual assets? And I am heartbroken to think
8 that we are going to lose that beautiful bridge. I'm
9 really shocked to see that. And how much impact will
10 the public have in your final choice of that because
11 it's -- I mean this is a tourist destination and
12 that's one of our visual assets.

13 And my second question is I've been
14 away for a while and I just came back. And I may be
15 late in this process. But it seems to me that the
16 contract has already been awarded to Parsons
17 Brinckerhoff.

18 MODERATOR O'DOWD: This is only for a
19 preliminary design. PB is creating the design build
20 package. And what that is is it defines what the
21 architectural envelope will be. We go through -- they
22 are actually carrying this through the environmental
23 process, both filing with the ENF and, in the future,
24 the Draft Environmental Impact Report, the Final

1 Environmental Impact Report, and the Environmental
2 Assessment. So they are doing essentially all the
3 permitting, the bulk of work in the initial design
4 right now.

5 In 2012, as shown on the board here
6 earlier, is when that preliminary work that PB is now
7 developing on behalf of MassDOT will be advertised and
8 we'll be soliciting bids from design build teams.
9 That design build team will be made up of a
10 contracting team and also a bridge engineer, design
11 engineering team. They will take the work that PB has
12 undergone right now, taking it through the permitting
13 process, and then further develop that into a final
14 design. So, the contract for the actual replacement
15 has not be let out yet.

16 And as far as being too late in the
17 process, you are not too late in the process.

18 LOIS MCNULTY: Okay.

19 MODERATOR O'DOWD: That's the intent of
20 these meetings right now is to try to solicit as much
21 information from the public as we possibly can so that
22 we feel comfortable moving forward on that the
23 decision has not only been made by the Highway Agency,
24 but has also been made by the public, with the support

1 of the public.

2 LOIS MCNULTY: Okay. Thank you.
3 Because in the *Daily News* it said -- I mean I can't
4 believe nobody has mentioned it tonight so far, but
5 Big Dig, hello. I mean I'm a little concerned. I
6 mean I would like you to convince me why I shouldn't
7 be concerned that this outfit might be building our
8 bridge.

9 MODERATOR O'DOWD: PB is a highly
10 qualified, highly competent group of engineers. They
11 went through a competitive process by which their
12 qualifications packages were evaluated equally among a
13 number of other engineering groups. And it was found
14 by the committee that was evaluating those proposals
15 and qualification packages that PB issued the best
16 ideas and using the highly qualified competent
17 personnel that they had available. So, it is with
18 that that we contracted with them.

19 They have not been barred from doing
20 any work with MassHighway, MassDOT. So --

21 LOIS MCNULTY: That's what you've got?

22 MODERATOR O'DOWD: MassHighway, MassDOT
23 --

24 LOIS MCNULTY: Okay.

1 MODERATOR O'DOWD: -- is fully
2 supportive of the work that they are doing. Any of
3 the work that they are doing is under the supervision
4 of our bridge engineers, our highway engineers, our
5 environmental engineers. So, ultimately, MassDOT
6 makes the decisions. Parsons Brinckerhoff brings to
7 the table years, and years, and years of competency
8 and experience in doing major complicated projects
9 such as this. Ultimately, the decisions based upon
10 the design, environmental, things of that nature, will
11 be made by MassDOT and the group of engineers that we
12 have in-house and the experts that we have in-house
13 under the supervision of our Administrator and our
14 Chief Engineer.

15 LOIS MCNULTY: Okay. Thank you.

16 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: I'd just like to
17 clarify one thing because it seems to be the
18 perception in terms of -- Parsons Brinckerhoff is, as
19 Michael said, a design firm. We don't build anything.
20 We're not the ones that built the Big Dig. We're one
21 of the design firms involved with it along with 26
22 other design firms. And we happen to have been one of
23 the larger ones.

24 But we do have a fully competent staff

1 involved with this project. We are an international
2 firm. We have about 13,000 people with offices in 46
3 states in the U.S. We've been in business for 125
4 years. We have been involved in some of the largest
5 projects within the U.S., from the brand new Woodrow
6 Wilson Bridge to the Bourne and Sagamore bridges over
7 the Cape Cod Canal. We designed them initially and we
8 have been retained again by the Army Corps to evaluate
9 them for ongoing maintenance needs that may be
10 required.

11 So, I think you can have the utmost
12 confidence in terms of what we're doing on this
13 project, working under the auspices of MassDOT.

14 LOIS MCNULTY: Well, I just hope you
15 can understand my concern, too.

16 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: You know, the press
17 grabs onto certain issues and certain things take on a
18 life of their own. And what you find quite often, the
19 closer you are to a story, the more you find out that
20 what you read is really what isn't the story. And I
21 guess I probably have spoken longer than I should
22 have on that issue.

23 LOIS MCNULTY: Okay. Thank you,
24 gentlemen.

1 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you.

2 Yes, sir?

3 TOM NATARIO: Thank you. Your
4 presentation was great. My name is Tom Natario, N-A-
5 T-A-R-I-O, Amesbury.

6 I share the same concerns as the
7 previous speaker. Parsons Brinckerhoff has definitely
8 designed the Big Dig and I believe has been taken to
9 task by our Attorney General and fined accordingly.
10 My question is why they were even allowed to bid on it
11 after paying fines and being found guilty of what they
12 were found guilty of. It had to do with oversight.

13 I'm glad to hear, Mike, that you're
14 talking about that MassDOT will have this oversight,
15 but I think that was the original plan for the Big
16 Dig. However, that didn't happen, as you know. The
17 oversight didn't occur by MassDOT. It occurred by
18 additional subcontractors hired by Parsons
19 Brinckerhoff.

20 MODERATOR O'DOWD: That's not the case
21 on this project.

22 TOM NATARIO: That's not the case on
23 this. Well, I hope you're correct. That's why I
24 share the same concerns. Parsons Brinckerhoff has

1 been recently acquired by a company from London, I
2 believe, for \$626 million. They employ 40,000
3 employees and made \$15 billion last year. My guess is
4 maybe they're going to be part of this bidding
5 process. And I would just encourage MassDOT to keep
6 an eye on things because I do share the concerns of
7 this engineering firm designing bridges in the
8 Commonwealth.

9 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Parsons Brinckerhoff
10 is precluded from bidding the final design or
11 construction of this project as a result of their
12 involvement in developing the environmental and the
13 initial preliminary drawings and preliminary designs
14 for this project.

15 TOM NATARIO: I'm glad to hear that.
16 But I think maybe that does need to be clear on paper
17 because I was under the same assumption. When you
18 read the bid being awarded, I think a lot of people
19 think that they're doing the whole thing.

20 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Okay.

21 TOM NATARIO: Where that's not the
22 case, I think that gives me a little more confidence
23 in what might happen to the bidding process and
24 especially with hopefully MassDOT oversight this time.

1 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Perhaps we can
2 clarify that with the newspaper reporters and articles
3 that come out in the future.

4 TOM NATARIO: Thank you.

5 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Yes, sir?

6 ROB NARDONE: I'll be very brief. My
7 name is Rob Nardone, N-A-R-D-O-N-E. I live here in
8 Amesbury. I'm a cyclotourist and bicycling advocate.
9 I know Mr. Watson mentioned things representing Mass.
10 Bike. But I just thought I'd give my point of view
11 for somebody that lives locally and commutes and bikes
12 regularly as somebody in the area.

13 And I think we lost a great opportunity
14 with the rebuild of the Chain Bridge and the Hines
15 Bridge in not having a bike lane. And that's one way
16 of crossing the river now that, as a cyclist, you'd
17 have to get off and walk. And I've been up and down
18 the Atlantic Coast, and coast to coast, and I'll say
19 that in South Carolina, at the Ravenel Bridge outside
20 of Charleston, there's a pedestrian bicycle lane
21 alongside the bridge. The George Washington Bridge in
22 New York City, which is also 95, there's a pedestrian
23 and cycling lane, and, also, in Connecticut, near
24 Groton on the Thames River. And I would just urge

1 you, speaking locally, I'd feel remiss if I didn't say
2 something tonight. I know you've already addressed it
3 with Mr. Watson, but I just wanted to get my voice out
4 there.

5 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you very much.

6 ROB NARDONE: And, again, thank you for
7 coming out tonight.

8 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you for those
9 comments.

10 Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

11 KAREN SOLSTAD: Can I speak again?

12 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Sure you can. Yeah.

13 KAREN SOLSTAD: It's Karen Solstad,
14 again, from the Amesbury Planning Board.

15 I came to this meeting driving into
16 traffic up 95. So, I really wasn't thinking too much
17 about the meeting, so I appreciate all the tremendous
18 comments from the audience who have really gotten my
19 mind thinking a lot.

20 One of the practical issues, when you
21 go 95 north and the connection to 49 south, you come
22 off of 110. Since that is a connection of an
23 interstate, but it's just a regular exit ramp that
24 backs up often -- people are hitting their brakes well

1 before the 110 eastbound exit because it's solid
2 traffic trying to get on the onramp. Will that be
3 taken into consideration of giving a wider slowdown
4 and egress to that tight turn? Because I'm always
5 looking in my rearview mirror because I'm waiting for
6 someone coming flying up 95 to be rear-ending me as
7 I'm watching all the brake lights ahead of me.

8 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: When I went through
9 the presentation and did the accident summaries, I
10 talked about Exit 58 a good bit. And with the
11 alignments that we have, the wideness, adding the
12 additional lane, and also the ability to improve what
13 are known as the acceleration and deceleration lanes
14 of the ramps approaching there, we believe we can take
15 the northbound side and bring it up to current
16 standards, which will change it dramatically. And the
17 types of concerns you have about the queues, and the
18 backups, and sudden traffic slowdowns which happen
19 there, we think a lot more maneuvering room would make
20 it a lot safer. And it's one of the -- beside the
21 bridge itself, it's one of the key improvements this
22 project will bring is you've got the bridge
23 improvement issue, you've got the Interchange 58
24 issue, and you've got the length of traffic between

1 495 and Route 60, which is terrible in the summertime.
2 And all three of those get addressed through the
3 project in terms of what the project is defining right
4 now and packaging.

5 KAREN SOLSTAD: The other question --
6 the other comment I'd like to make is about the
7 passive and possible -- having a bike lane or some
8 type of passive use of the bridge. The Hines Bridge,
9 when the state was here talking about that, we asked
10 them to try to design in some side things for all the
11 eagle viewers who come to the area to look at the
12 eagles on the river because you can walk out -- you
13 can try to find -- park somewhere near the Hines
14 Bridge and walk out. And you're sort of standing
15 there on the bridge trying to hold your butt in
16 because people are flying by you. And I don't know
17 what has happened in that final bridge plan.

18 But when my kids were little, I'd
19 bicycle -- I'd walk them across the Hines Bridge a lot
20 to take them up to Deer Island, to take them over to
21 Newburyport. And it seems that with the Whittier
22 Bridge, with Moseley Woods and Moseley, to have a
23 connector that would include even if you just came up
24 on the side of the bridge and had 100 feet going out

1 or 50 feet going out with a passive viewing area, I
2 think the Merrimack River is a real treasure in this
3 area. And when you drive down 495, you cross over the
4 Merrimack numerous times. And there's sort of --
5 you're totally separated from the river. And to have
6 the opportunity to connect Moseley and Moseley, and
7 maybe do something from the Amesbury side, where, as a
8 local resident, you can get out and really take
9 advantage of those tremendous viewsapes from the
10 bridge and enjoy it. I mean it would be a -- I'm a
11 rubbernecker when I go over the bridge because I'm
12 always looking in both directions because it's
13 absolutely stunningly beautiful. I sort of say, "Wow!
14 I get to drive over this and enjoy these views." And
15 to give that opportunity for the residents and
16 tourists in this area to have those viewsapes of the
17 river I think would really bring the river a lot
18 closer and would be a fantastic opportunity that would
19 really be too bad to miss.

20 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We are exploring
21 those opportunities as well.

22 KAREN SOLSTAD: Great.

23 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We see the
24 importance of it as well.

1 KAREN SOLSTAD: Thank you.

2 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you.

3 Yes, sir?

4 JEFF JONES: Hi. My name is Jeff
5 Jones. I live over at 42 Rocky Hill Road.

6 I have a question regarding you
7 mentioned the reconstruction of Route 495 as part of
8 the project. And the reason why I'm concerned about
9 this, in 1962, the state came by and, at the time,
10 they had -- well, around 1962 or a couple of years
11 prior, they had taken 17 acres of the property that I
12 currently reside on. And I was just concerned about
13 eminent domain. And are there any properties that
14 you're looking at at this point in time that you're
15 looking at taking?

16 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Our impacts with 495
17 are going to be very limited. We won't be
18 reconstructing portion of 495 as part of this project.
19 The only impact will be where the 495 crosses the I-95
20 and whether or not there's any impacts associated with
21 the widening versus the existing overpass that's there
22 now.

23 And with regards to the I-95 widening
24 along this corridor, right now it's very early on to

1 identify whether or not there's going to be any
2 temporary easement rights warranted, if there will be
3 any strip takings needed. But we don't anticipate any
4 large taking of parcels. Most of the work that we are
5 anticipating doing can be done within the existing
6 right of way.

7 JEFF JONES: Thank you. That's all I
8 have.

9 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you.
10 Yes, sir?

11 LARS JOHANNESSEN: Lars Johannessen
12 from Amesbury, J-O-H-A-N-N-E-S-S-E-N.

13 STENOGRAPHER: You caught me by
14 surprise. Start again.

15 LARS JOHANNESSEN: J-O-H-A-N-N-E-S-S-E-
16 N.

17 My question is just purely as far as
18 the noise goes, the noise levels. Is this going to be
19 a 24-hour operation, or is it going to be a 12 or an
20 eight?

21 MODERATOR O'DOWD: We would expect
22 using an accelerated type bridge construction. That
23 may explore the possibility of working multiple
24 shifts. I can't say for sure it's going to be a 24-

1 hour shift. But it's very likely that there could be
2 as many as two shifts warranted to try and meet the
3 objective of the program, and that's to complete the
4 construction by 2016, which may necessitate the need
5 for us to use an expanded work hour schedule not only
6 during the day, but also during the night and on
7 weekends.

8 LARS JOHANNESSEN: All right. Thank
9 you.

10 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Are there any other
11 further questions? Yes, sir?

12 SCOTT MORTIMER: Hi. My name is Scott
13 Mortimer. I'm a member of the Moseley Woods Parks
14 Commission. And I really appreciate you guys doing
15 this long meeting tonight with us. I wanted to make
16 one comment and also a quick question.

17 I just want to echo the concerns --
18 other people have mentioned the aesthetic quality of
19 the bridge. I hope that -- I guess that I hope this
20 current comment period isn't the last time for input
21 from the public on it. I just I think some of the
22 designs looked, to my eye, like they belonged more in
23 like an on-ramp to Logan Airport or Boston Harbor
24 rather than redoing the Zakim Bridge here as we had

1 into northern New England. So, I look forward to
2 hopefully a process that works closely with the public
3 to make sure the residents can take part in that
4 decision.

5 And then my question goes back to
6 earlier in the presentation regarding wetlands. On
7 the Newburyport side of I-95, on the east side of the
8 highway, on the water part of the land, there's a
9 stream that runs sort of downhill to the river that
10 has a -- it goes through an old retention pond from
11 the estate that was there. It looks to me like
12 there's a big wetland in there. So I'm just curious,
13 is that something that was just missed or not
14 technically wetland?

15 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: That's on Water
16 Department land. And, as we've said a number of
17 times, we don't look at this project leaving the
18 confines of the right-of-way that the state already
19 has under its control.

20 SCOTT MORTIMER: Okay.

21 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: It doesn't mean
22 that we -- there might be some what are known as spot
23 takings to facilitate the construction period, but
24 there -- anything that we've looked at right now --

1 and we have two of the detailed plans over there with
2 the two options still alive for the alignment, and all
3 of those alignments, as you can see, they get close in
4 a couple of spots to what the edge of what we call the
5 right-of-way of the state controlled land as of today,
6 and we looked at everything within that. Things above
7 the ridge line or down in other properties, we don't
8 foresee that of having any impacts on.

9 SCOTT MORTIMER: Okay. Okay. I'll
10 take a better look at those plans then.

11 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: Okay.

12 SCOTT MORTIMER: Thanks for the answer.

13 STENOGRAPHER: Scott, your last name
14 again.

15 SCOTT MORTIMER: Sure. It's M-O-R-T-I-
16 M-E-R.

17 MODERATOR O'DOWD: With regards to your
18 opportunity to participate in future public meetings,
19 this will not be the last time. As mentioned earlier,
20 there is a full environmental process that we have to
21 go through. And one of the keys to that is reaching
22 out to the public on a number of different occasions.
23 And, as Mike mentioned earlier in his presentation,
24 we've committed to meeting -- coming out to the

1 community at least on a quarterly basis to present to
2 you what we've developed, the alternatives, some of
3 the key features to any of the alternatives to get --
4 to solicit the input that we need from the public to
5 help make -- help make our decision making a little
6 bit more thorough. So, we accept and we ask for your
7 participation in future public meetings.

8 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: And we agree.
9 Those bridge options at the end, we're very early into
10 that process. They're rather stark.

11 SCOTT MORTIMER: Okay.

12 MICHAEL BERTOULIN: They're not
13 developed at all. There's a number of other things
14 that will be developed. But, in a sense of wanting to
15 share with the public and not holding back, we
16 actually put some of those out there and they're very
17 early in their development, and they're relatively
18 undefined, and some of them do look a little awkward
19 for the setting, but that's all part of the process.

20 SCOTT MORTIMER: Okay. Thank you for
21 answering my question.

22 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Yes, ma'am?

23 RACHEL WEBB: Hi. My name is Rachel
24 Webb. I'm a resident of Newburyport. My parents are

1 direct abutters to the project.

2 And my question is where the -- where
3 you may, in fact, have some instances of spot takings
4 to facilitate construction, what would be the
5 timeframe for that, notification of the property
6 owners?

7 MODERATOR O'DOWD: As part of the early
8 design work, the preliminary design work that PB is
9 conducting on our behalf, they are identifying right
10 now -- and it's going to be dependent upon the
11 alternative, the preferred alternative that is
12 selected to pursue during the final design. We'll be
13 able to better identify those as we progress further
14 on with the alternatives analysis.

15 As noted earlier in both the screening
16 criteria one and the screening criteria for selection
17 two, right-of-way is an important facet of how we
18 evaluate the alternatives. We are attempting to
19 minimize any permanent takings or any rights of entry
20 that may be required during construction, any
21 temporary easement rights. But, as the time
22 progresses on, and the evaluation of the alternatives,
23 and how much detail we're able to present to you,
24 we'll be able to better define if there are going to

1 be any impacts. Right now it's too early to tell.

2 RACHEL WEBB: Okay. So for any --

3 MODERATOR O'DOWD: So as we meet on a
4 quarterly basis and as these plans continue to get
5 further detailed and further developed, we'll be able
6 to present to you if there are any impacts associated,
7 whether it be from a construction standpoint or a
8 temporary easement, spot takings, things of that
9 nature.

10 RACHEL WEBB: So like for construction
11 laydown areas, those areas may not vary too much. So
12 those clarifications might come forward regardless of
13 the alternative chosen?

14 MODERATOR O'DOWD: As far as
15 construction laydown areas, it's something typically
16 that MassDOT does not acquire on behalf of the
17 contractor, but what we do do is we try to make the
18 site accessible for a contractor. So we can't allow
19 them to bid on something that we haven't made
20 accessible for them. But as far as for staging areas
21 or laydown areas, it's the contractor, the contracting
22 team's responsibility to acquire that.

23 So, we're specifically identifying
24 whether or not it's necessary for rights-of-way to be

1 taken or to be acquired specifically for the
2 construction itself. As far as laydown areas that a
3 contractor may require outside of the right-of-way
4 that we've acquired, or within the laydown areas
5 within the 95 corridor itself, those will be within
6 the existing rights-of-way that MassDOT owns so there
7 wouldn't be any impacts.

8 But it's so early in the process for me
9 to be able to definitively say that there are no
10 impacts to right-of-way or that there will be impacts
11 to right-of-way, I can't say that for sure right now.

12 RACHEL WEBB: Okay. Thank you.

13 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Yes, Mr.
14 Johannessen?

15 LARS JOHANNESSEN: Thank you again for
16 coming out here.

17 I just wanted to say, as far as the
18 aesthetics on the bridge, we all seem to be pretty in
19 agreement on, in Amesbury anyway, that we like the way
20 it looks, and Newburyport as well.

21 When it was first built, and it was
22 probably on a scale of A to F, a B minus or something,
23 but we've overgrown to make it into an A seeing what
24 we have there. And I guess what we'd like to see, if

1 it's -- since it seems impossible to renovate what we
2 already have, then shoot high. Get something that we
3 can all be proud of. That's what I'd like to see.

4 Thank you.

5 MODERATOR O'DOWD: Thank you.

6 Are there any other comments in the
7 audience tonight?

8 I want to thank you all for coming out
9 here tonight. As mentioned, we will be back again,
10 very likely within the next three months, to present
11 to you what we've developed and any other features
12 that we've identified.

13 So, if we can be of any assistance to
14 you, the design team, myself, we'll be here as long as
15 necessary, if you have any other questions pertaining
16 to the project boards that you have or pertaining to
17 the project presentation that was presented tonight.
18 Otherwise, I want to thank you very much for coming
19 out. And if you'd like to submit your comments in
20 writing, please see Stephanie at the back of the room
21 and she'll be happy to take your information.

22 Thank you.

23 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
24 concluded at 8:39 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Judith A. Luciano, do hereby certify that the foregoing record is a true and accurate transcription of the proceedings in the above-captioned matter to the best of my skill and ability.

Judith A. Luciano

**** ALL NAMES NOT PROVIDED WERE SPELLED PHONETICALLY TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY**

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