

Christina Street Rail Bridge Feasibility Study - Community E...

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

bridge, railing, needham, project, newton, piles, existing, jennifer, price, design, center, questions, railings, river, connection, feasibility study, parking lot, scenario, lucy, bicycle



05:42

Hello, So, I was, Oh, can you see the captions on the screen. Good question.



05:51

Oh, it's so I get to know this is live transcript, live transcription has been enabled. And then I say, who can see the transcript, the account owner and everyone in the meeting can save the transcript, share it with others. I mean, the short answer is no, I'm not seeing them come up.



06:09

So, but if you click the More button is there an option for you to turn on.



06:16

Yeah, feels that so there's an option below, I Jennifer. This is live transcript, and then if I say show subtitle, now I can see it.



06:27

Okay, so I just need to, I might just give a little preview, or a little. Yeah, Intro speech to

everyone to make sure that folks can be seeing the



06:37

live captioning. Exactly, yeah. I got a note that said it first, it told me it's recording and then it also told me that live transcripts have been enabled. But I had to go down to the bottom and click yet live transcript, and then show live transcript. I clicked there. Okay, great. And then I didn't know if you had a preference for I have a version of that presentation just on my desktop and I, we have, there's kind of two ways to go about it if we wanted to switch screens or I share my screen the whole time and advance the slides for you.



07:17

Yeah, that's, that's what we were discussing. Yeah, so I can make you, actually I'll make you and Jennifer both co hosts. Apparently Steve was having some internet issues earlier so I do want to make sure also that if I die out, that everybody can still get. Yes, I have it up on my computer now. Okay.



07:43

You have the link that I sent about 20 minutes ago. Okay good. Sorry about that being a little late i A few people sent me some, some late changes.



07:53

It was on that email. It seems to come into me even later than you think you sent it. But because I was, I was calling Claire to say hey do you have the, do you have the survey. I'm sorry that the presentation.



08:12

Anyway, that the last version was there so the working version we had going all day is the latest and greatest essentially, it had people's comments that we were kind of tracking. And then there was one edit that Scott actually added a slide I think it adds some value, this, this plan view, sort of a late add and I noticed it was named draft. So with all that said, I also wanted a copy on my desktop. If I were sharing some not linking to an online version. It might be a little faster, with all those combined I shaved a new copy called it,

just with today's date, and uploaded it and sent the link.



08:52

Yeah, so, so I have it up now. I can share my screen. Oh, actually, hang on. I've got, I've got it up in two different ways so let me just close that close out everything else I'm going to try to while I'm pulling this up. Do you know, at what point you want to transition. Do you want to do. Slide seven with the scope project scope or is that me,



09:29

I think you are seven, and then I'm a and the way I cued it up is kind of diving into the first part of your scope, and a little more detail. And so I can I can steal it from you at eight. The other alternative is if I'm sharing the whole time I could advance the slides for you, Jennifer, but if you wanted to be in control your slides, then we could swap screen.



09:56

Either way, I mean, so I have it up now, and can drive. Sure. I think let me just make sure that my yet my arrow keys are working. Yeah, I can I can advance me and then I can stop sharing, and turn it over to you if you'd like or I can respond to the next slide please, if you'd rather,



10:16

yeah, if you keep going. I think it'll be pretty straightforward if you can keep going. And yeah, if you don't mind. Yep, driving, then that works. And so



10:28

I think what we'll do is Jennifer. I'll maybe give a little bit of a zoom introduction on this opening slide and then pass things over to you. To kick things off presentation wise. Okay, sounds good.



10:44

And then q&a I imagine, You know, Claire, you probably have some thoughts on that I

guess there probably be some messages and questions coming in through zoom.



10:53

Yeah, so I have the chat setting set to chat only to host, just because I know public chats are can be a problem. So I'm going to, in my little zoom intro gonna say, feel free to put any questions you have in the chat, once we reach the end of the presentation we'll go through the chat questions first, and then address any other questions using the raise hand function in zoom. Yep, that sounds great. And I am going to be taking minutes as best I can. During this, but I'm going to save the live transcript and the recording of the meeting as well to polish them up after so they can be posted online. Great.



11:33

You did start the recording, you know, 10 minutes ago when we were chatting, I don't know if you want to, you restart or you just crop it, or



11:41

actually yeah you know what everyone I'm gonna stop it right now and then we'll let everybody in because it is five o'clock and I'll restart it.



12:08

Welcome, everybody, to this Christina street real bridge shared use pathway feasibility study meeting, Lord, there's a mouthful. Just a quick zoom introduction for everybody participating tonight. We do have Live subtitles enabled, you should be able to see those on your screen. If you can't, there's a more option in the zoom settings that should allow you to turn on the Live subtitles. We are going to start this meeting off with a presentation from our project team, and move on to a question and answer session after. If you have any questions that come up during the presentation, feel free to put them in the chat where there'll be sent to me. At the end of the presentation we'll go through all the questions received in the chat first and then move on to people using the raise hand function to ask questions live to the project team. And with that, Intro I'm not seeing anybody else in the waiting rooms so I am going to pass things off to Jennifer steel chief environmental planner for the city of New



13:21

you, and thank you everyone who has joined us this evening. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to share with you this, the fabulous opportunities that this project presents and to hear, hear from you. So this evening, you will be hearing from. I can advance the slides, you will be hearing from the project team. I'm Jennifer Steele, and you've just met Claire run deli from the Newton city staff, and from VHB our design consultants you'll be hearing from Shanta Keller, Kaylee ro Stutz and Scott Brunner tonight. We have also had the had the pleasure of working quite closely with DCR on this project, as well as representatives from the town of Needham, a number of Newton city councillors, of course the very price center representative and local area councils from from Newton Highlands and Newton upper falls. So we've had we've had some wonderful early discussions and tonight is the opportunity for us to hear from you. So just for some brief background I'm sure most of you are very familiar with, with the bridge, which you can see circled down in the lower right hand corner of this aerial view, but it is, it was an old rail bridge that connected out across the Charles River from land in Needham which currently has trails on it owned and managed by the DCR department State Department of Conservation and recreation, and the spur line continued to the north up the up the right hand side of the screen here and wrapped around to the, to the west, crossing over Needham Street and connecting to what is now the Newton upper, upper falls Greenway. And so let's this old rail line that was that the bridge was was once a part of the bridge again here in the lower right hand corner of your screen has long been abandoned, but also long been used by area residents, and in a very informal way for as a pedestrian crossing. But, as, as time went on, concerns about safety and liability mounted and so recently, the, the northern the northern terminus on the Newton side was dated and locked. And that really was the, the wake up call the impetus for us to look into the possibilities for a longer term solution that would allow a formal pedestrian and bicycle shared use path to be to be created in this location. So we reached out through the mass trails grant program and we're successful in securing a grant for conducting this feasibility study, we, we do have funding. At this point in time only for the feasibility study itself we don't have funds lined up for final designs or construction but this is the first step in what we hope will continue to unfold in, in creating a permanent shared use path connection here. So recently we reached out to you with a survey and had tremendous feedback 262 of you responded. So thanks to thanks to all of you. And it was really it was really interesting. When just pull out a couple of facts that came out of the survey. On the left you'll see the question about who has used this bridge in the past, and while many interested respondents haven't actually used it. There, there has been a good deal of recreational walking and cycling. In the past, over this bridge, but many many many respondents were would be interested in using an upgraded bridge. It's understandable seeing the condition of the bridge now that it represents us scary opportunity but lots of,

lots of interest in in future use. And the other interesting response that we got back was the amount of paddling, that is, that is takes place on this segment of the river, and so we want to be sure that the designs, the designs that we come up with. Embrace with not only use of the bridge from above, but embrace the use of the river below



18:05

from the, from the community survey, we, the four major take home messages that were that we got in to in response to our open ended questions were that people we're most interested in accessibility conductivity, safety, and, and ultimately the timing of this project. So, accessibility, we fully anticipate creating a fully ADA compliant all Age Friendly structure that will provide easy access from both sides of the river with connectivity, people are interested in pursuing this connection for recreation for business purposes for transfer transit and and pleasure. Safety is obviously paramount to our residents as well as well as to us, and so we will be really delving into the details of what that means in terms of railings visibility of approach, angles, lines of sight and so on. And of course timing. There is a great deal of interest from the potential user community to try to move this phase of the project forward with the anticipation of trying to promote the design and construction phases in the future. So we are doing, are doing our best as best we can with this phase one, the, the feasibility study. The so this delving into that a little bit more deeply the scope of this feasibility study asked VHB to assess three scenarios. That is, the reuse or rehabilitation of the existing structure, it obviously needs need some work. But, what would it take to reuse the existing bridge, and in order to create the desired the desired shared use path scenario two, that needs to be explored is actually creating a new bridge in exactly the same alignment. So that would require demolition of the existing bridge, and either a prefab or or custom built bridge in exactly the same location. And then finally scenario three would have us building a new bridge in a new location, but not undergoing demolition of the existing bridge, and that would obviously then represent the need to create a slightly new alignment, but it would also save on the necessity of having to go through the demolition of the existing bridge. So those are the three scenarios that are being that are being explored within this, within all of these lenses of of safety and accessibility and so on, sifting through all of these different interests, then will allow us to come up with a single preferred scenario that VHB will then develop a little more, more robustly into a concept level set of plans, again not final design plans, but just a set of concept plans that we would, that we would then be able to move forward with if funding makes itself available. And with that, I think I will turn it over to Sean Taylor from BH now.



21:26

Thanks, my slide. Okay. Thanks, Jennifer. So as you describe sort of the scope of our project. that first step was the feasibility study before we select the preferred alternative and and develop concept plans and what I've done on this slide is sort of breaking that down even a little further. So that first step within that first step, what are some of those sub tasks, and what have we done now and then and sort of where we go next, and so the first step was just collecting the existing information on the bridge, pretty straightforward with one of the record plans we have the record plans for when the railroad bridge was designed and constructed in the 50s, and then we conducted a field survey to verify that geometry. And what's shown on those existing plans and sort of what we're dealing with as well as on the approaches or the connections on either side of the bridge. What elevations we're dealing with and so forth there in our survey, as well as conducted a bridge inspection so visual inspection where we actually look at the structural condition of the bridge as it stands today take lots of photos and I'm going to be sharing most of that with you soon in this presentation. And so, we gather the all that existing information, and then we gather even more information from all of you so Jennifer described the online survey that we've done to now. And then here we are tonight also providing the information we have to date and giving everyone a platform to in turn give us ideas and give us input and for us to collect more information. So then essentially after that we're digesting all that information we're documenting that combining all the ideas you all have and filtering it through and integrating it with the site constraints with some design criteria that I'll mention, you know, certain codes and standards, and ultimately we'll be able to evaluate each scenario, and, and see how they stack up against each other and outline the pros and cons, develop some concepts and, as Jennifer said the next step is for the city in the town of Needham to to select the preferred alternative. So let me just jump right into it with some of the existing information that we have so far. So here we are again you've already seen some aerial images of the bridge. This one is kind of an interesting angle you probably never seen before we're flying on a drone, sort of upstream of the bridge looking down and to orient you we're sort of looking Northwest, and so Needham is over on the right hand side and you can see the berry Price Center in the background in the parking lot where the bridge, and their parking lot right there yet where our bridge lands, and then off to the left side, that's the, the Needham side or the forest is in, and it's pretty well filled in, you can't quite see but the DCR the blue heron trail runs right around where Jennifer's putting our mouse. And so now let me just zoom in a little bit kind of fly underneath the bridge and I've got a picture showing some of the components of the bridge that you'll probably hear us describing as we go through the alternatives and the conditions, but to get everyone oriented. This is what it looks like under the bridge so let's start at the water side,



24:35

And those metal piles they're their steel encased concrete piles. Obviously they go deep into the ground below the water, they come up out of the water and support that concrete cap that we call a pier caps. And then, spanning along the pier caps or between the pier caps is the whole superstructure of the bridge. The superstructure is those concrete beams that will carry everything between each pier. And then on top of it, you get a little preview of the railing here, but then on the next slide, we sort of jump up, pop, and I'll show you what it looks like from above here. So there's yep the ballast and ties you can see those are remnants of what the section looks like I, the next slide has a section but it's a little bit of a tub shape, you could say, and it was filled with the ballast stone, and the ties and that's where the railroad tracks were, And then sort of off to the left side is a small safety walk, you can see and a hand railing and then existing hand railing that's there, those are essentially the components of what it looks like in the field on the top side of the next slide looks at some engineering sketches, and so on the left side is that record existing plan, the design plans from the 1950s that show all of that geometry. This is the geometry that when we were out there, we're sort of verifying in the field, that what we're showing those design plans is actually there and validating it one piece of no on the right side, we've just clarified that a little bit so everyone can kind of look, we're going to be showing some cross sections of the bridge and this is a cross section of the existing condition and you can see those same elements I was just describing, you'll probably know a small difference what might look like a small difference between the two but the piles down at the bottom, we actually see out there that the piles they angle outwards as they go down, they're called they're battered and that is significant, it, it helps the structure resist any kind of lateral loads so any loads like wind pushing it from the side or any kind of rocking forces. You can imagine that's a little bit of a crutch that helps it stick out there so it's doing a little bit more work than just resisting any kind of vertical loads the weight of a, of the bridge itself for the people on top of it and so that's a consideration when we're out there, and in particular when you start looking at the conditions of those piles, which I'll bring up. But I have one more view a different view of the bridge on the next slide to get people oriented. Again the record plan is up above so this is a cross section cut along the river, and we're looking directly at the side of the bridge. And what I'll just note here is that there's about 20 feet between each pier and there's seven spans, so it's about 140 feet long total this this bridge as it is today and down below is just a little view looking along there you can see how you span between each of those was different piers. And so let's get into the actual conditions of the bridge now we have a layout in the geometry so the most immediate element if you're out there, especially if you're in the water kind of most ominous looking thing condition we see out there is these three piles and it's a little tricky to see what the reflection of the water, but you are looking at that correctly and those three piles in particular that are upstream piles have complete section loss right

around the water level. And as expected, those take the brunt of all the debris or any kind of ice loads that are coming down there. They deteriorated through that protective steel casing and have deteriorated through the concrete core completely there. So that's obviously a consideration when we're talking about reusing the bridge. And then even besides those three piles, the rest of the piles I have another picture here of sort of a typical pile, and you can see some deterioration some rust, a little bit of Section loss in that protective coating. So it's a consideration of what is the existing condition of the bridge, what's the existing capacity but then also looking at you in the future will continue to degrade future maintenance and a consideration for maybe preserving this so it lasts a long time, so that'll factor into our decision. And then on the the next piece that I'll jump to is kind of on the top side and there's much better news here I would say, I started the picture on the left.



29:05

Essentially, it looks pretty good, I would say I would give it a fair condition rating here, where the undersides of the beams have some expected minor issues minor deficiencies and cracks and whatnot, but pretty typical of some concrete we would see this age, on the right looks a little more significant with some of the spalling from the larger pieces of concrete have sort of chipped out, but again nothing that would, that we saw would preclude us from kind of reusing the superstructure, more or less it would require repairs preservation rehabilitation. They're not as significant as the piles that I showed earlier. Alright so then I just want to touch upon this so you've seen some of the existing conditions, and I mentioned, taking those existing conditions combining with the input we get from all of you and all of our ideas, and then we're part of what we're going to be doing to evaluate this is there's some design criteria that we're certainly going to meet. And so we're going to be working within, within those criteria, and I've listed some of them here. Accessibility I think Jennifer already mentioned that meeting, the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for surface treatments and slopes and all those kinds of things. The railing design is pretty significant here because we want to meet for a safe railing, the, the loads that are required for code to have a safe railing. Not only does it have to be a pretty robust railing, but also the openings between, you can say the railings so someone couldn't fall through those openings, we're going to meet all those latest standards so when you look at the railing that's out there today that's not something that would meet these standards. So just to consideration, mostly, these are the safety requirements that we're going to be meeting, as well as the bridge loading. We're going to be meeting the minimum requirements just to handle at least cyclists and pedestrians as a minimum. And then, regulatory requirements and that might impact certain things that we do in the river and on the either side of the bridge on the approaches but obviously complying with all, all the laws and so forth. so then there's also going to be some design

criteria that we'll try to optimize, as we are able to, which would be the width that we achieve, and you're seeing a graphic here that this just shows a typical path, that would be on either side of the bridge. So it shows some flexibility between the of the pathway itself that eight to 12 feet wide is being a typical shared use path, but it's significant to note that when you have a bicycle path you want to have a two foot shoulder, and the railings on the outside of that shoulder, and we'll describe this in some views of some actual bridge sections but it's worth noting in order to have your handlebar safely clear and your pedals and so forth. You can't consider the full width as sort of being usable, you need to be offset a little bit from any vertical obstructions railings or any kind of signs or anything like that so it's worth noting on on this graphic, but again some of the criteria we're going to try to optimize would be like lifespan and being of the bridge being low maintenance so some of the repairs you might be able to do a more significant repair now but get a longer life out of your bridge in the future and vice versa, we'll be balancing that minimizing impacts to our abutters the parking lot on the east side and, and, and the Needham land but as well as environmental impacts with trees and so forth certainly want to minimize those minimizing costs and evaluating other other amenities that I have listed here as part of our consideration so under the next slide you can Jennifer. I'm just going to reiterate here just to end that we are evaluating the three scenarios Jennifer already mentioned, and so the following slides is Kaylee is going to take over here and talk about what those three scenarios look like for the bridge and then Scott's going to talk about what those look like on the connections on either side of the bridge. And so with scenario one Kaylie, take it away. My apologies, all I needed to unmute Kaylee.



33:17

No worries. Hi everyone, um, so I'm just going to jump right in. Talk a little bit about the scenarios that Shonto just touched on. So our first scenario of reusing and relocation of the existing bridge. We have a lot of different options. I have just two of them highlighted for you here to give you an idea on some of the different things we're looking at. Now both of these options as you can see involve demolishing the existing safety walk, and the sides of the tub structure. Before putting a new deck on top of the concrete beams, that's partially because a lot of the spalling and deterioration that is present is on these parts of the structure, but mainly it's to accommodate a new bridge railing. It can be difficult to anchor new railings to concrete of this age, especially with the configuration we have here. New railings will need to satisfy today's design standards for pedestrians and bicycles, and those require some pretty strong anchorage designs. And one of the main considerations that Chantal touched on earlier was the path with over the bridge. In order to accommodate bicycle traffic you need to have two foot shoulders on either side of the path. So that means for a six foot path you actually need 10 feet, clear, and for a 10 foot path you need 14 feet clear in the past we most often try to go for at least 14 feet

clear on the structures. However, we have done a few at 10 and 12 feet, and all are definitely feasible in this location. So for the first option on, no worries. The first option on the left side here is for a 10 foot clear path between the railings. This option would just pay right over the existing beams and is shown with new concrete curbs and metal festering railings, similar to the structure and then top photo. This offers some benefits such as less formwork to construct since we are not cantilevering over the edge, as well as more continuity as far as aesthetics with the existing concrete structure. The second option on the right is a 14 foot clear path shown with a new timber deck and railing system similar to the photo shown on the bottom. This option offers the benefit of additional path with with no formwork required, as well as using a more sustainable material and timber. And also, like we mentioned before, the final option for even the scenario has not been selected as there are countless iterations for new decks and railing systems. It should also be mentioned that, whatever deck option is selected for the scenario the bridge would still require some concrete repair to the pier caps and superstructure beams, as well as prepare and preservation for the existing pile.



36:32

So for now, scenarios, two, and three, we are considering only one bridge type, just on different alignments. There you two would be in place of the existing bridge requiring demolition and Scenario three would be adjacent to the existing bridge leaving the existing bridge to be demolished, at a later date whenever necessary. And both options have their own benefits and challenges. So for a new structure, we'd be looking to span the entire river without adding new peers into the water, as peers can be costly and time consuming, with an extended permitting process for a span of the size we'd recommend using a prefabricated steel through truss, as they are extremely efficient with respect to strength to weight ratios which can help cut down on material costs. You can see some example pictures here, the top is from a VHB project on the cape for a rail trail over the bass, river, and the bottom is from the Charles River walkway in Watertown. One of the benefits to using this type of new bridge here is these structures are primarily shot fabricated which can cut down on construction time and also results in longer lifespans and lower future maintenance costs. Another huge benefit would be removing all of the existing piers and obstructions in the river which I know is important money based on the responses to the survey from users who like to use the waterway below. And with that I will pass it over to Scott, to discuss some of the approach implications for these scenarios.



38:22

Thank you, Kaylee, and hi everybody and I hope everyone's doing well tonight. So now

that we've covered the bridge area and some of the possibilities with the bridge itself. We now want to go through and bring you through some of the other design considerations that are specific to this project. And I want to get you set up on this slide. As the next few slides will be very similar, we're in the top right, you'll kind of see a locus map with red arrows and red arrows pretty much just going to indicate some of the pictures on the left side where we're looking at where we are. So just to kind of give you a geographical sense and north is up on that locus map. Just to get again give someone an idea of where we are. So, left, left photo kind of showing the approach, or what it looks like leading up to the bridge, looking through the berry Price Center, which is private property and we will touch upon that a little bit later. The middle photo is if you just came from the blue heron trail and you're going towards the bridge. So you're coming from the south. And next slide. So, this. This slide highlights the existing 48 inch MW ra culvert that exists on the south side of the southeast side. Thank you, Jennifer. This is very helpful, kind of pointing these things out. Yeah, so this is just a consideration for some of the alternatives that you know have an alternate alignment for the bridge that Kaylee and Shawna went over. If we wanted to put the alignment on this side the south side or the, the east side of the existing bridge. It likely would impact this MW Ira line, meaning we have to relocate it and it's just going to drive up the cost of the project. Next slide. So blue heron trail that exists today is shown in the light gray, right where that arrow is on the locus, if you look at also the photo on the left, you see that same red arrow that's about where we would come in right at the high point of the path and the photo. The middle picture is just a different vantage point of that same location, You can actually see the old rail railroad ties in the foreground, or the background rather, on the other side of the path. So that's about where we're going to tie in, and when we tie in that intersection is going to be fully ADA compliant. Next slide. So the barre Price Center so this is probably one of the more critical things that we want to be considered considerate of for the design. As I mentioned before the very Price Center is private property. This area of the private property is actively used as a driveway, that's used for parking, and also winter snow storage. The property serves those with special needs, and includes the transportation to and from their facility. And it's really just something that the project design will need to consider and be respectful of just so we make sure that we do not hinder their needs, that they require. So, as shown in the photos. Both, both photos on the left, the driveway opening today is very wide. And we have started discussions with the property owner about narrowing that driveway, and they are amendable to have more of a typical driveway with his that way people cannot fly in and out of the driveway.



42:20

And, of course, it goes without saying, as this project progresses in the design progresses we are going to continue to work with that property owner to make sure that their needs

are met. Next slide. So, what can this project look like in the end. The next two slides are really just going to be again concepts. Again, we're here to get your feedback. These are just some ideas. So for Scenario One and two. For the bridge rehab option or the option where we demo the existing bridge and place back, a new bridge in the exact same location. This is the possibility that we could have at the bottom of the photo, tying into the blue heron trail in pretty much almost a straight shot to the existing bridge. And then after that bridge going into the private property of Barry Price Center, a slight curve to get off, and we will go over that in an upcoming slide as to why. But also we are trying to where possible stay within those red lines, which are the former railroad sidelines. So we want to try to keep the path contained within that as much as possible, and to kind of bring people through the color scheme of this, the light brown is more of a landscaping area. Potential really just a buffer area, I know on Christina Street today it is a landscaped area between the roadway and the parking lot, it'd be the same type of treatment. In the, the dark gray, that would be your path, or sidewalk or driveway, depending on where we're looking, the regular brown color at the bridge is meant to be some type of, you know, timber deck and as Kaylee covered that could be timber that could be paved, we've just shown it here as a different color just to make it stand out a little bit better. Next slide please. So scenario three, where we have a different alignment, and we could keep the existing bridge as is build a new bridge, adjacent to the existing bridge. And again I chose to show this on the west side of the existing bridge, just to avoid that MW ra culvert. Exactly. So, you know, in this case, it is. It is slightly going over the former railroad sideline right at the intersection of the street but that is something that we can work through. And also, I kind of want to lead into the next slide here where that the, the alignment, leading up to Christina Street is really something that we've, we've talked to the city about, and there is potential for future projects in connection. Because it seems like the community needs a connection to go even farther past Christina street so that's something we want to make sure that we do not preclude, and have to create additional work later we want this project to cleanly match up to any potential future project. Next slide. And this slide is really kind of highlighting some of the challenges to any future connection across the street, across Christina Street on the left side you can kind of see, you know sight distance coming around the corner, especially the middle picture too. If I'm standing at the edge of that roadway where the path is coming in the sight distance around that corner is not very good, to say the least, we would want to be much better than that. And just to kind of highlight you could see the tree in the middle picture there with the little concrete bound. Yep, right there, and on the picture on the right you can see we're coming directly off the bridge straight off the bridge, and it lands right there. So I think Jennifer, you can go back to either the previous two slides. That is the reason why we are starting to kind of curve off to the left a little bit to get away. As far as we can from that potential sight distance issue, and if we ever had to put a crossing there, we would want to be as far left as possible. And there might be other other things that we would need to do. If that time

came. So with that I want to open it up to questions and comments and Jennifer I'll hand it back to you.



47:14

All right, thank you very much. That was a terrific presentation, all of you, and I am actually going to turn it over to Claire, who has been monitoring the chat window.



47:27

Yes, so thank you to everyone who sent in some questions to the chat, I'm going to run through these questions and sort of in order to try and keep things running smoothly. The first thing that I wanted to run through was we did guest suggestion in the chat. If we need to put a new bridge structure in place. They do sell historic bridges at a very cheap price that we could pick up and move in place here. I don't know if that's the perfect solution for the situation but it's definitely something that could be looked more into and definitely just an interesting thing to look into in general. And so the first couple of questions that I'm going to ask, are going to be for the VHB team. Just try and keep them a little more organized. The first question that I'm going to ask, is to clarify some language Scott used, what are real road sidelines.



48:16

Yes so railroad sidelines, essentially, if you want to think of it as property or rights to use someone else's property. So the railroad used to go through here essentially their right of way or their property usage was contained within those red lines. And they have very old maps called Val maps that would actually show in mathematize these lines so that we can get to end up in the right place in space. For this, but yes that is essentially what they are property lines or easement lines essentially for them.



48:58

So, the next two questions that we received and sort of combining into one. Is there a risk of the existing bridge structure collapsing due to pile damage and before any work could start, and sort of a follow on to that is it feasible to use the existing structure at all because of the piling damage.



49:19

I can jump in and start that. The, we haven't yet done our full structural analysis of the piles which we will be doing as part of the feasibility study again we've kind of just been out there taking pictures, but considering the existing bridge used to hold up railroad loads, and today, three of the piles are mostly intact and one of the piles is not intact. the actual weight of the structure itself, wait. It appears that that would be those three remaining piles would be sufficient to just to keep it there in its condition today we didn't see an imminent failure risk when we're out there, we were comfortable walking across the top of the bridge. But we haven't run the numbers yet. We're pretty early on in this space, but I will. I'll just sort of leave it there. As far as the imminent failure so in the future use. Again we're going to do some structural analysis or future reuse really to determine if those piles as they remain could withstand some additional, you know, bicyclists and pedestrians on there, whether that's the narrow path or a wider path, versus if we'll need to do some type of rehabilitation or repairs. So, there are options for rehabilitating the piles, fully encasing them and reconstructing them essentially and strengthening them in other ways as well as preserving the piles so they don't continue to deteriorate. So we think it's feasible to reuse them. But it will likely require some work to the piles, but it's yet to be determined if what that scope of work is we need to run the numbers essentially to figure that out.



51:11

Great. And last question that we've received for the VHB team is. And I guess this is sort of going along with the last question as well we don't really quite know yet but what would be required to repair the existing piles so I think, Shawn to actually just answered that one as well. Yeah, I



51:28

think I think so I could expand just a little bit on what would be required. So, we're determining if you need any strengthening, there's sort of two pieces, one would be actually reestablishing strength or strengthening the piles and one option is as I sort of described as is encasing the piles, with some kind of outer steel casing and there's different options of what you do to fill the inside of those casings pumping them with like an underwater grout and so forth. There's other types of wrappings that you can do to preserve the piles between FRP and other materials. And so, it would most likely look like something wrapped in existing piles. I would expect those would be the most likely scenarios, again if we need them. There are other options as far as driving new pile

supports but I think that's really unlikely here.



52:21

Great. A couple of questions that have come through that I'm just gonna run through the answers to fairly quickly because they're fairly quick answers on the first is there going to be signage at the bridge letting folks know that it connects to DCR parkland and show a map of the area and Susan the answer to that is almost definitely yes. As part of the mass trails grant program that, that's funding this feasibility study, We do agree to make sure to provide reference to that, whenever this bridge would be constructed, and we would want to make sure that folks know where they're going, where the bridge connects to So, making wayfinding in the field is definitely a priority for whenever this project would move forward. Another quick question, costs and implications of all three options we've gotten that question a few in a few different ways. The reality is we don't know yet. That is what VHB is going to develop some rough cost estimates for the three options that are going to be reviewed by the project team, The city of Newton staff town of Needham staff, and we're going to decide, you know what makes the most sense. Cost wise time wise, you know, what meets the needs of the community best and and from there we'll be able to go forward with trying to secure more formal funding. At this point there are potential options for funding but because we don't know necessarily what the cost would be required yet. We don't necessarily know where to look for funding because of project cost limits that are often applied to grant funding and state and federal funding. So those are a few questions that I just wanted to get answers out to and then I wanted to pass it along to Jennifer's for some maybe some larger connection type questions. Is there a plan to connect this bridge to the Greenway in some way.



54:15

Um, I wouldn't, I would not go so far as to use the word plan, but I think it is a hope held by many that at the very least, I'm establishing a connection from here up to jackin net straight or no I'm sorry, industrial place, wood, wood facility facilitate would expand off road connectivity, if I go back to the overview slide, if I can. Sorry it's a little slow to respond here. There, the entire this spur alignment, has been intruded upon in, in a few places so this, this slide, I need to move some of this out of the way here. This slide shows the connection from from the bridge, there has been a construction at about this latitude, if you will, that impinges on a direct connectivity at this point in time, this portion of the rail alignment is relatively an altered. But then we have some alteration up at this point, and of course the challenge of crossing Needham Street. Currently this spur has been developed as a roughly four foot wide stone dust pathway that is fully open to the public

and connects connects nicely with the upper falls Greenway, but there are multiple private property owners and multiple obstructions that would have to be addressed to make any connection, all the way up to that to that spur line, a shorter alternative is to at least get off road connectivity, up to a road connection up here that would still allow bicyclists and pedestrians to not have to navigate Needham Street for over over this over this portion. So, lots of, lots of hopes and but but no actual plans in the works



56:31

great, um, Jennifer I'm throwing this question at you in more of a wetland standpoint, um, is there pollution in the river that could be disturbed by the demolition or removal of the piles.



56:45

I am sure that there is some contamination in the sediments, but that would all be very carefully regulated through the permitting process. So, Our Conservation Commission's Newton and NIAMS Commission's would work very closely with the applicant and DP through standard permitting processes to ensure that the sediments are tested prior to any disturbance are handled appropriately on site and then disposed of accordingly based on the results of the preliminary testing. So, I don't I'm not aware of what the conditions of the sediments in this exact stretch of the river are, but it has been an industrialized river for some time and so I would be surprised if there were some contaminants that would need to be handled carefully.



57:43

I'm just one thing that I do want to address quickly so the purpose of this meeting is to get feedback on what the community desires are for the potential reopening of this bridge location. At this point in time, the bridge is not going to be opened and. But the plan is for the bridge to be open. Once it is safe and accessible, and no longer a liability. I just wanted to address that because we've been getting quite a number of questions about it, and I do want to be sure that we try and keep this meeting on track as much as possible. Um, next question which could probably go to Shanta. Um, there has been historic use of the bridge for fishers and people doing photography and nature watching is the whatever future constructed bridge gonna accommodate uses.



58:40

That's a good question. We heard a lot of that back in our survey. So there's a few ways to accommodate it a short answer, I would say yes it will be a common you know considered and accommodated, but one of the most important features would be the width of the structure itself. So, with a slightly wider structure it's a little bit easier to accommodate someone who's maybe standing on the bridge as well as maybe a commuter who's cycling across the bridge. So that'll be the most important feature I mentioned in some of my. I had to list of criteria the safety criteria essentially and then in my second criteria that will try to minimize impacts and costs or maximize sort of amenities and I would put, there's a few amenities that we're sort of considering putting in that category and that would be something like a certain spot on the bridge that is wider than the rest a little bit of a bump out, whether that's in the middle of the bridge, ideally, although that's a little more challenging to construct or at the ends of the bridge, if it widens out a little bit with a little bit of an overlook feature are some details that have been used in some projects now you would have to suit the needs of the project, as far as costs and impacts on those approaches and so forth but the most straightforward answer is that we want this bridge to just sort of be designed with the appropriate width and with the appropriate sort of speed controls and design so that people all users can use it safely on the deck, whether that you're standing and observing, taking pictures, fishing, or, or commuting, and we did see a significant amount of people who would be using it sort of commuting from the neighborhood in New in into Needham, so we would expect some sort of through traffic that you would want to accommodate for sure. It's a consideration that's less for sure so thank you for that.



1:00:38

Another question sort of related to who is using the pathway. Somebody's acknowledging that the sight lines are very poor. On Christina Street and happy to hear that if future extensions are being considered, but is there a longer in the longer term is there a plan for potentially installing a barrier on the Newton side to prevent children or folks unexpecting of the crossing from just rolling out into Christina street before the the actual crosswalk is put into place.



1:01:13

Skylar prime is the best answer this but I will just chime in quickly in that. Yeah right, our scope of of work and Christina st, the edge of the berry price parking lot and so the future condition going across the street is something that we don't anticipate designing as part

of this project, but we want to make sure our common our project. Most importantly doesn't preclude any future designs but from our experience designing trails and accurate crossings of intersections. There are a wide variety of warning strips and features and those kind of things that Scott maybe you could just touch upon, even though again considering we're not going to be designing those as part of this concept that whatever concept we end up with, you won't see those in our final concept but



1:02:00

yep. Yeah, no, definitely, it's a great question. I have two kids four and six and, you know, I have to make sure that they don't do that. You know what, what can we do to make sure that you know they understand not to cross. Like they mentioned the comment of barriers of possibility, a low fence, landscaping, just you know even shrubs, just to kind of break up the you know the areas so that they can actually go through it and have the path be the opening. And there's other things with that sight distance you know that we would have to consider, you know how far left, can we actually push it so that you improve the sight distance do we need, you know, also some type of a RFB rectangular rapid flashing beacon, you know, those, those are the types of questions you know for that future project that we would have to get into, but there are definitely a lot of ways that we could try to break up the the area and make it clear. Even kids you know where, where they should tend to be approaching that Christina street crossing.



1:03:12

Wonderful, um, the next couple of questions I am going to sort of route together because it has to do with the rail right of way. So, we had a question who currently owns the rail right of way. Did the railroad ever own the land between the bridge and Christina Street, and what were the conditions surrounding its use. And why was the spur constructed.



1:03:40

So, I will do my best to, to relate what I think I am remembering accurately. The bridge was constructed in 1959 were completed in 1959 ish. It was the land was deeded or the rights were deeded to. Originally, the New York, New Haven river rail company actually I think there was even a predecessor to that. And then, it was, it was transferred to New York, New Haven, and then from New York, New Haven to Penn Central, and then from Penn Central. We believe it was transferred to the MBTA, but we have yet to have conclusive documentation about that very last transfer. But as far as as far as we know, the bridge is owned by MBTA the lands on either side are owned outright in fee by on the

south, the state through, through the care and custody of the DCR Department of Conservation and recreation, and on the north by the berry Price Center, those. and on those properties where there was an easement for the rail line to have operated those easements have been relinquished, at least on the I know on the Newton side. So, there is no longer a rail. Use easement on the Newton side, on, on both the berry price property and the property further to the north. So, the as far as I understand, the deed chain. The bridge is in ownership of MBTA lands on either side or in clear, clear fee ownership by the state and the very Price Center, and there are no associated lingering associated rights with the rest of the rail alignment in the immediate immediately adjacent to this bridge. And I'll take back any of that, that, that I've gotten wrong.



1:06:12

The history is unclear, however we were required to secure an MBTA access license in order for our crews to go on the bridge so that's what we're going with at this point. Um, a good question that I think is for the overall project team, privately and on one side DCR on the other, what is the role of Newton Needham in the Prop in this project.



1:06:36

I'm sorry, the role of Newton and Needham, was clear. Yeah, well I think it will, I will. Newton will claim the mantle of instigator, I think, in so far as we promoted this project as a potential grant opportunity. And we reached out to the town of Needham and with their with their support and encouragement, applied for the grant and then with DCR support received the grant. So, but the, I think the the question. I imagine the question is looking forward. And I think there will need to continue to be municipal engagement with seeking funds for design and construction. And ultimately, our ownership will have to be will have to be sorted out and potentially transferred in order in order to have the final, final design created MBTA is, I can only guess is not interested in owning and operating a bicycle and pedestrian connection and a line that they have no continued interests in. So, I think there would have to be a transfer, and whether that's to a joint municipality in a joint municipality venture or or the state is is not yet determined.



1:08:09

Great. Um, next question came in. Sorry, getting a little lost in the chat, but. So this is a question sort of addressing a question that had been responded to earlier. If you accommodate fishing you may jeopardize the safety of the price clients, as I expect the railing would need to be six feet tall in order to protect all folks. Shot, did you did you have

any thoughts in terms of design criteria,



1:08:47

yes, we definitely the railings will get a lot of attention and there's requirements different requirements for different cases. Generally the standard. I would have to say I'm not sure I've seen a six foot tall requirement, except for when you're over, if you're trying to protect the facility below meaning over a railroad over a highway sometimes you have screening that's required, so you got, you can't throw anything off the bridge or so forth. We've seen requirements so people don't additional screens are additional heights and people don't jump off. But what I can state is I know ash chose minimum and Astro again isn't just the highway bridges they have got, they have a pedestrian bridge guidelines they also have bicycle facility guidelines and in both of those documents the minimum railing width is 42 inches so three and a half feet tall, and that's compliant that meets that off is the same height as the building code requirements, but they do have stipulations for the owner might have their own requirements and in particular if there's a concerning area or special concern somewhere, that it's not uncommon to see a 48 inch or 54 inch high railing typically at like a highly exposed area for cyclists are a little bit higher up, and I've seen 54 inch requirements a four and a half feet. There's maybe potentially some extra handrail requirements that I think we'll be looking at here and particularly being adjacent to the very Price Center. But we would want to accommodate all users yeah so I think considering accessibility and safety first and foremost, considering users taking pictures and fishing. Considering cyclists. And just you have visibility kind of back on taking pictures. We definitely want people to be able to see the river in view it, and so we see that often come up as a decision between sort of a three and a half foot or a four and a half foot railing is that that obscures the view of a lot of people and similarly with the trusses coming through with the trusses at what elevation they are. We showed a picture of the bridge in Watertown, and that trust in particular is a little bit taller and you hear some people saying it's hard to see over that. So those are all considerations and most specifically, those will probably come in in the final design details in the next phase of this project, but we'll be considering we basically want to outline all the users and all the preferences and, and the minimum requirements.



1:11:31

Right. This is a question sort of for the overall project team. Considering the amount of use that we saw from the survey of folks using the river for kayaking and boating and stuff. is there hasn't been any consideration for putting a location in under the bridge or adjacent to the bridge to allow people to put into the river. I think I can start things off by

saying the bank there is quite steep and would require some potential infrastructure to get folks down from the parking lot height to the bank, but it is something that could be considered in future designs, especially if there is a larger interest in the project from dcr.



1:12:13

Yeah I would say that that has not been a real consideration for, for two reasons one is that the remote nature of the access from the Needham side doesn't doesn't really lend itself to the carrying of boats into the to the bridge, alignment location. And because of the intense use of the very Price Center parking lot is that the opening there that the driveway opening at that location serves not only very Price Center but all of the businesses in that small office park, carrying carrying boats, whether they're card top card top or trailer, would be a real challenge from a traffic management perspective I would, I would think. And the conflicts between boats and cyclists and pedestrians could be significant.



1:13:12

Will Newton complete the missing sections of the sidewalk on Christina Street to ensure continuity for walkers and joggers. That would, making sure that the bridge connects to something excessively would definitely be a priority for the project especially because future connections along the rail right of way will require you know significant coordination with other private property owners. And so before we can get those lined up, we do want to be sure that if we are constructing a shared use path on the bridge that it can connect to somewhere, and be that the only option at this point would be the sidewalk on Christina street I definitely think that would be a priority for any future future project



1:13:53

scope right though it would have to just get on to the, the city's sidewalk project list and get in the queue. It would be outside of the scope of this particular project, I would think. But, but we would certainly want to lobby for it. In conjunction with this.



1:14:19

So, somebody made a comment there doesn't seem to be any official mention of the project in any medium government meetings can somebody confirm interest in support on

the Needham side. So we do actually have one Select Board member on the call and also one staff member was on the call briefly Katie King assistant town manager was on the call. And so there is definitely interest in from Needham, the the grant project was applied for by Newton on its own, which is why we've sort of been taking the lead from this point. But in any future project considerations Needham would would definitely be a partner. Partner with us.



1:14:55

And, and we know from the survey that a number of Newton residents, sorry Needham residents are very interested in the project and there certainly is a lot of both residential and commercial real estate in Needham that would be quite directly served by a bridge in this location.



1:15:18

Um, what is VHB his current scope of work and how much design work is covered by the existing grant, I think we did sort of go over this briefly, but I didn't know some people joined late so if we wanted to do a brief recap of just what the end point of this current project is going to be. You want me to do that and Jennifer. Either way is fine with me.



1:15:40

Yeah, if you if you don't mind everything, perhaps, you know, just go through the bullets but maybe describe the product, if you know, yeah, the nature of the product, or perhaps would be very valuable. Sure,



1:15:53

well I'll, I'll kind of start at the end and then fill in the gaps, a little bit again we discussed this in the, in the presentation so definitely go back and look at the slides and listen out the detail that we went through, but the end product is going to be a concept plan. So there's going to be drawings, and it's going to show a concept and that'll be illustrating a preferred concept, the limits of work are just going to be the connection and the medium side at the DCR blue heron trail, and the edge of the berry price parking lot at Christina street, so it will, it will show you the trail connections and alignments on either side, it'll show you the bridge cross section, and, and mostly in concept, enough to say this is the structure type. This is the length of the bridge, and essentially enough to get a preliminary

cost estimate that would take it to the next step. So to visually be able to see it, and to be able to cost it out. It's one of the last step, and maybe I'll just keep working my way backwards. And our first product we have two deliverables, our first product though is a feasibility study report. And so in our report. We're going to summarize all this data that I mentioned we collected existing information between pictures and measurements. We'll be compiling all the input we get from all of you essentially, that being the public and the surveys and the questions and so forth. We'll be incorporating that with the site constraints. The codes, and then we'll be laying out how all that plays into these three scenarios that are listed on the screen here, the pros and the cons of each one the impacts of each one costs of each one, estimated cost of each one, and some very some conceptual sketches of what each alternative will look like. So we'll deliver that report to the city of New in and they'll, and they'll determine here new into Needham and we'll select the preferred scenario. Once they do that and give it back to us. We'll do those concept plans. Makes sense. Yeah.



1:18:09

And so we are coming up on the end of the chat questions, I think we have addressed all of them so I'm going to ask, Lucy to unmute, so that we can kick off the live q&a If folks do have any other live questions they'd like to ask, just go ahead and use the raise hand function. And I'll ask you to unmute and you'll unmute on your end, and we can kick things off the floor is yours, Lucy. Okay,



1:18:39

thank you so much. Um, first of all, I guess I am really concerned about what I've just heard that, I think, I think people need to understand who attends the Price Center. The people there have very, some have very very profound disabilities, they may be adults, but they may be functioning at a six month or a one year level. So they're tall, but they're toddlers, if you think about somebody said they have young children, of course they wanted their young children to be protected. So, would they be happy with a fence that came up to their waist. Over the bridge so the child could just topple over. Because those are the kinds of people that may wander onto the bridge not purposely, but somehow sometimes that happens, they do do get out and they go where they're not supposed to go. So that's why, why the fence is locked now, but people need to understand we're dealing with some of the most profoundly disabled people, that exist. So, um, there needs to be very much extra protection for them. And I am not hearing that understanding. So please think about when you say, we only need this height fence. Is that going to serve the people at Price Center. So, so that's of concern to me, and incidentally I have been

involved with the founding of Price Center, somewhat, many, many years ago and I have a son who currently attends that the Price Center. I'm. Fortunately around fortunately, he's not mobile so he probably couldn't get to the, the bridge, but there are people who can. Some of them have autism, they're pretty high functioning people but their behavior is is very very irregular, and they could easily walk as fast as you can think and get to that bridge so they need to be protected. Um, I guess, in my hopes for the price center were that the end of the parking lot would become a grassy area, because there is no grass for the clients to go out and enjoy the outside I mean it's a lovely area overlooking the water, but they have no place to go. Except hard top, and the, the plan and the thoughts have been for many years that on the end of the parking lot would become a grassy area, where, where there would be benches for people to come out and set. Now, it seems like I'm hearing talk about landscaping a path, which would totally block any way to get beyond the path for people who are using wheelchairs. So that's of concern. I just don't quite understand why it's not possible to use the Needham Street entrance to the pathway. Why does it have to go across private property. So, nobody's answered that I mean, it seems to me it's not very much out of the way to go over the new bridge, and on into the path. Um, so, I guess. I mean those are my main concerns and then there's the issue, um, where is the snow going to go and they they plow the parking lot where was the equipment for the snow going to go. And as Price Center expands it has lots of room to expand and have they right now have 200 clients, they could have many more clients which and each one, or each couple come in advance, where are all those vans going to go as they pick up currently they line up. If you take away their access to part of the parking lot. I don't know where they're going. And that's, I think is going to be an issue. I'm sorry Lucy contado Go ahead. No, I mean I guess unless you have other questions for me, so I'm very concerned about this plan I see a very large area in the map that it's brown I'm not sure that we'll be going along Christina Street. I'm not sure what that's whether there's going to be nine access there that's where they on some kind of blocking of the of the driveway will happen, but it looks very big to me.



1:23:14

So Lucy if I can jump in and just say that we are working very closely with Lou McDonald, who's the executive director of the



1:23:21

process, and I've spoken with a little about this as well. Yeah,



1:23:25

and so all of these concept plans that are being developed tonight are going to be edited to include things that we're hearing from the public tonight to include concerns from Lou and the Price Center, and obviously no final design will be developed without sign off from Lou clearly it is the price centers land, and we won't be constructing anything on their property without, without their approval. So I just want to make, make sure that you are reassured that we are fully 100% committed to ensuring that the price centers needs are met, and that those, the residents and clients of the price centers needs are being met. So,



1:24:05

so the price center will have a sign off on what you do. I mean, they can say no that's not going to meet the needs of our people.



1:24:14

Yes, so it is their parking lot, we currently do not have a public access easement or any sort of rights to go through their parking lot, so that can change. But we wouldn't be able to change unless we got sign off from the Price Center, we they would need to grant us an easement.



1:24:31

I, so if it's in their control because it seems to me they're opposing on desires and fishing and safety. I mean, so you have to have either you can fish or you can be shaved and. And I know some people might want to fish, but do they have more say than the people who need to be safe. So I guess I'm feeling like, people are agreeing to these questions when people are asking, and maybe they should say, we might consider that, but we're not. We have to ensure the safety of the people who are close by, There are 200 people at currently as I share the presenter. Those people need to be considered and I would assume their safety will come before people's need to fish. I mean, that's, that's what I'm hoping anyway.



1:25:27

Yes so safety and access are definitely top priorities for the project.



1:25:33

And can you tell me why they cannot people cannot, I assume this is a bicycle, a bicycle access point. Um, why can't they go over the bridge and Andrew from Needham Street.



1:25:51

It's so the, the interest is in providing off street. Bicycle and Pedestrian opportunities so that commuter, People who are not comfortable riding so close to vehicular traffic could continue to make these connections from from the north to the south and vice versa. It is in one regard you're right it is redundant, but it is providing a different type of connection, one on which different types of people can feel safe. It is also providing direct recreational opportunity for for the clients of the Price Center for those who are willing and able to use this to use a connection here, it would provide direct access to the blue heron trail network. So there there are there are a variety of reasons.



1:26:59

Okay well, so I guess that's really all I have to say I just feel like you, please, please consider on the safety of the people at procedure. Yes, yes Thank Thank you.



1:27:13

Thank you so much for your comments listening, we really appreciate it and we'll make sure that they all get included in the meeting minutes. Next to have raised their hand. Lucy I'm gonna lower your hand now is Susan Spitz.



1:27:31

Hi, can you hear me, yes we can. I just wanted to respond to some of Lucy's concerns because she said that nobody had there's there's so many things to say I'm going to try and be say a few things. I live on Christina street very near the bridge and have for almost 30 years. So this bridge has been a very important asset to the neighborhood, many many many decades long before the Price Center ever occupied that area so even though the needs of the Price Center occupant is important, the needs of the entire Newton Highlands new and upper falls and the adjacent need and communities are also important. The bridge, first of all, serves as a commute an area of commute for people, people actually cross from one side to the other for various reasons. So you say why can't they go around. For example, there is a whole religious community, that uses this bridge.

These are, there's an orthodox hotpot actually ultra orthodox synagogue. Just a few blocks from the bridge, it's up way if you go a baker right on Christina's Street, go up Rachel road, it's right there. Those people do not drive on Saturdays Friday nights various holidays, so they're not here today, many of them. I've never aware of this they filled out the survey but I'm speaking right now for them. And many of them live in Needham they live at the Charles River Plaza apartments, and in the cold and rain and snow, and whatever darkness in winter at four o'clock, these people use the bridge to cross over to that synagogue, it is different than walking all the way around, and they use it to walk back, so it actually does serve as a point of commute, we talked about the commercial uses, I just wanted to bring attention to the religious uses as far as you said fishing. In addition to fishing as it's been discussed people do take pictures on the bridge lugging photographic active equipment, you know, around is different from having it right there in the community, being able to walk down the street and walk onto all that Parkland is a different lifestyle a different opportunity, a different asset to the community, than having to walk all the way around, it's just a value while you're on Needham street, you're on a busy street, and it's just not the same thing as having an in community recreational opportunity which is not which is not just the fishing. So we do have a lot of needs to consider, but the relatively recent arrival of the Price Center is very important, but there wasn't a whole existing use of the bridge beforehand, and I would like to preserve that I don't want to have to go in a car to go around Needham street, I don't necessarily want to walk around, I want to be able to go down the street and walk on the bridges, I always have to see the sunset, to take pictures of it, to do all the things that we've talked about, and I think that we need to find a way to continue to allow the bridge to be the asset to the community that it always has been and satisfy now the relatively recent but important needs of the Price Center I also I practice safe it there I have never seen anybody wander down and I was down there every day. I assume people are supervised just like children need to be supervised. You don't have children wandering into Bullock's pond we don't have children wandering and Cutler Park. These can be very dangerous places, any outdoor site can be an extremely dangerous place for anybody who is not supervised, who is a child who is disabled, etc. And that would be the case, you know, even if we had a six foot high railing. So I think that, I don't know what the supervision is at the price and I don't see how somebody could wander, that far away from the building all the way down to the bridge. If that can happen it's certainly something that needs to be considered. But as I said, there's an entire three communities that have been using the bridge for those purposes for for a long time. Thank you Susan. Are you on mute if you're Yeah, can you know,



1:31:22

George is up next. He is now unmuted.



1:31:26

Okay, thank you very much. I think I started my video but I don't know if it's working. It is excellent. Okay, so thanks very much for sharing the presentation I think it's a visionary presentation I commend Jennifer and Claire and the city of Newton and the town of Needham and everybody else involved for getting this study going as folks have noted, it's been a long term dream and goal in the community to be able to have more walking connections and biking connections off street. So I wanted to speak up and explain that the safety of bicycle riding on Needham Street is awful, the situation is very difficult for an experienced rider there's so much traffic. So many people rushing so much congestion, and so much coming in and out of driveways there it's scary. I personally when I use that route. I go on the upper falls Greenway to be able to stay out of traffic on the bicycle and it's there were a connection to the upper folds Greenway, an off street pathway connection I would certainly use it and I would expect quite a few people to want to use it for commuting over to Needham, or back the other way to Newton and potentially alleviating traffic in the future on Needham Street as well by getting people to be able to you know use their active transportation to do it so I think this could be a huge asset to the community. And a way forward to help everybody. And really, I don't recommend bicycling on Needham Street and even with the upcoming reconstruction, we still expecting a ton of traffic and that makes for for unsafe conditions for bicycling so thank you very much for moving this forward. Thank you, Jane, you are up next. Okay.



1:33:19

It's hard to know what to say, how to follow up George, because he really encapsulates. So many of the issues that, that we who like to enjoy bicycle or enjoy the green of Newton the Garden City I know that my husband and I walked along the blue heron trail many times when we lived in that neighborhood, and it was just a lovely option and people need more options for avoiding getting in their cars and being on Needham Street. My, especially with the development increasing and, you know, the line between Needham and Newton in terms of people work, you know, living in one and working in the other, You know those, those boundaries are falling and. And this trail was used for decades, you know, until the Price Center, closed the gate, you know, move there from the other side of Newton and then close the gate. So, I think, you know, that has to, I think the Price Center has to take that in consideration. But here's my question. I, that the answers that I'm getting just seem to be a really roundabout like, they will open up. They will The Price Center will make the bridge open to the community, if it fits their needs, but we're not

hearing, I have not heard one stipulation from the Price Center what they're requiring, I know that, you know, the director is on the call and hasn't said anything, we're putting a lot of investment, not only dollars but people's time. Individual city councilors residence is a lot of investment going into this, but I have not yet heard what the price center, actually it's going, what do they need to see in order to approve this. Because I think if we hear what they need to see, and are they contractually agreeing to this before we're investing all this money in studies and studies and plans and everything, I'm just a little bit uncomfortable with this whole thing right now.



1:35:47

So Jane if I could jump in, so we have been working with Lou, from the kickoff of the grant project we did get their support before even filing for the grant funding. Okay, the Price Center wants to see this bridge open, they want to be able to use this for their clients and for it to be open to the public, again, that they understand that this was a community link, prior to them moving there, but obviously their primary concern has to be for the safety of their clients and as landowners, they have the right to put the lock on the bridge there. So this



1:36:19

questioning that I'm not questioning that they have the right to do that. And I'm absolutely not questioning that they need to protect the safety of their people. I'm just saying what are their requirements before we move forward because I've not heard that. And, you know, I actually, I actually, you know, I've, I don't want to say how but I have been involved with the Price Center, and I do feel that having a bridge there would be a community access a community resource for for their clients, they're in a building next to one of the most beautiful, you know, river runs in Newton, and there's no way for their residents to access all that beauty and nature. And I would like to see it, I actually would like to see it, I've been there and I've said, Wow, How, how it would be really lovely if these clients were, were, were enjoying the view like physically able to be near there. So I support the Price Center I support their clients being, you know, interacting directly, not just looking out the windows. I really do. If I'm just wondering what is it that they are requiring because you're asking for us, our support and I'm just saying, what is it that they are requiring, and I've just not heard that.



1:37:46

So at this point of the project process we're really trying to establish costs of potential

design options that would bring the bridge into a accessible state for for the bridge to be safe to use with their client with anybody, really, so that all all ages, all user types, all you know ability levels can be able to access the bridge safely by and therefore, so if you can just answer one little question. If any of these, these plans because I think the plans are beautiful. I think that they're really, you know wonderful I mean obviously I prefer for one over the other, but I think they're, they're marvelous so if you can just tell me that the Price Center is agreed that if plan B for example, is approved, and Bill that they will then allow the public access, then I'll be, I'll be, I'll be very cool and chill about this. Yeah, I just have not heard that right,



1:38:52

I think we're still in a very preliminary phase here of assessing existing conditions and ultimately feasibility of a variety of scenarios, the price centers interests are going to be factored in to those, but we, but they, they have not been asked to to commit to any to any outcome at this point in time, there have been conversations between VHB and and and the city of Newton and in very price. All of that is getting thrown into the hopper now, and you will see some of these answers in. In the final product, but I would say that at this point in time. We don't have specific answers to those questions. And, and we will only have, I think, general answers to some of those questions at the end of this at the end of the feasibility study with these concept designs. But certainly, I will say that the Price Center has shown, you know, shown tremendous interest in this project, and a respect for the broader community's interest in the project, they have been very accommodating and supportive and engaged, and we are, we will continue to work with them throughout now this collection of information from the residents collection of more information from the Price Center to ensure that everyone's interests are coordinated. But just as we really haven't heard from the residents, what, what their primary interests are in terms of width, or, or railing, you know designs or or anything, we did, we don't have we don't have the details like that from the Price Center at this point in time. So, same level, same level of early phase, preliminary information gathering from citizens from the Price Center and those will all get thrown in the same same hopper.



1:40:59

Okay, well, I would assume then that if these widths are not or rail heights are not acceptable to that to them that they will weigh



1:41:11

out. Oh,



1:41:13

yes, yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you so and again I apologize I'm not trying to beat around the bush or avoid answering questions, but it's tough because we are so early in this in this project.



1:41:28

Well,



1:41:28

where the Price Center is on the call so maybe, maybe we can hear from them. Thank you. Thank you. All right, thank you.



1:41:38

Councilor downs, I'm hoping that you'll ask the question you asked in the chat which I was hoping to save to the end, but it seems like we might be reaching that point. So,



1:41:50

yes, exactly. This is really exciting to see this coming along so far already. From this idea to some concepts and things we can weigh in on. I'm delighted to see this area moving forward. So what's the next step, what can we do to help, how can we move this forward.



1:42:18

So at this point, Jennifer, I don't know if you want to jump in with anything else but at this point, send us your comments, please. You know, been submitted in the chat and we've heard verbally, we are writing down and recording to ensure that it gets incorporated into the minutes and is taken into consideration by the design team. Um, this presentation that was given tonight will be up on the website tomorrow, so that folks can take a look at it and share it around, and the meeting minutes will be up as soon as they are done, but we are hoping to get feedback from folks by next Wednesday end of day, so a week, a week

from today, essentially, we're hoping this because we do have a timeline for this grant project, unfortunately, we need to get our services done by June 30 which is the end of the fiscal year for both the city and the state. So we are on a tight timeline to get this done but but this is not the end of the road by any means. Once we have the you know the final pieces from this grant project we do hope to move forward with securing funding for you know final designs and construction and more coordination with the Price Center and the public. But if the contact information, Jennifer, if you wouldn't mind switching back to the very last slide. That'll be up there. My contact information is on the project website. Feel free to throw your email in the chat if you are not already on the Constant Contact List and would like to be. We are definitely going to continue to engage folks as, as this project ends and as we move forward in general, as far as next steps that the public can take directly I mean, no right to your representatives that you think this is a great project. We are potentially looking into some state funding, so that that could serve us well. But we will be updating folks through the constant contact with what they can do now in the future. Jennifer Did you are you you're muted. I am not seeing any other hands raised. Oh, Andrea, raised her hand, I'm showing her again so she can pop back



1:44:33

yeah I'm just wondering if you're going to send out another survey or something like that so we can wait yeah, on these, just even with open ended comments. We just think that would be a useful way to gather input. Great news,



1:44:49

we can definitely consider sending a another survey out through the constant contact for folks to further to ease folks getting their input into the city. Definitely,



1:44:59

Yeah, particularly with a tight timeline. And it just would be easier to be able to click click click and get and get done and yeah I'm sure you'll also get more thoughtful comments in that but appreciate it. Great work, looking forward to this.



1:45:17

Great, thank you so much. All right, we, we do still have time. If anyone else has questions or comments that they would like to share.



1:45:31

Again, feel free to throw any comments in the chat if you too if you don't feel like speaking out loud or feel free to use the raise hand function on Zune Hi, Ted, asking you to unmute now.



1:45:50

My name is Ted Chapman I'm the project manager for the Riverside Greenway working group we're working at the other end of Newton, to establish a continuity of, off, off road connections from Auburndale through Lower Falls. And I just want to commend Jennifer and Claire on the work they're doing and the and the city's commitment to this project because it's a, it's so complicated. These these projects which involve multiple jurisdictions state, railroads, otherwise and. And I think that you've got a great start on this and I'm looking forward to seeing this evolve, and anything we can do to support you, let us know.



1:46:40

Wonderful, thank you and and Ted. Right back at you with so much gratitude for all that you have done with the pony trust trail for those who have not yet had the pleasure of walking on the recently rehabilitated pony trust trail associated with the DCRs Riverside, Riverside reservation off of recreation road, there's a great new entrance there leads you all down all the way down along the river to, to the, what's to the off ramp from from 95 CD road. Yeah I know no one knows what that's the old, old, old 128 over 128 There we go. Anyway the trail is marvelous. It's such an improvement over the old goat path is as we used to call it. And and Ted's Ted's championing of that project has really, really been stupendous so



1:47:42

thank you. And I invite anybody to attend our ribbon cutting ceremony on the 17th of June, at 10am at Riverside Park will say I'm sorry say the date again. It's June 17 10am It's a Thursday morning, for real this time. It'll be it'll happen this time we have, we have the DCR is coordinated so the commissioner The DCR will be there the mayor and State Representative KCON Oh wonderful. Yeah, Mayor fuller will be there. so great and we'll be taking a tour afterwards to show all the adjacent connections that are put on the books, so to say, Ah,



1:48:27

good, good so much good good stuff in the works, yeah. Again, many many things. Oh, My pleasure. Well,



1:48:37

if anybody else has any questions, do please raise your hand, but it does seem like we are winding down. We'll stay on for, you know the next 23 minutes or so until we end at seven o'clock when I know some folks are going to probably be jumping off to go see the council budget meetings, but we will stay on if anybody has any other questions, feel free to reach out or throw something in the chat,



1:49:08

can stop the share and return return us to gallery view. Lucy raising her hand again, you see if you want to unmute. Oh,



1:49:34

did I unmute, can you hear me, yes. Okay, I guess your question up, you want comments by next Wednesday where do they go. So



1:49:43

you can send them to me at sea, run deli, which, my name is right up on the screen, it's my first initial my last name at Newton ma.gov I'm going to throw it in the chat right now also for everyone,



1:49:54

again, are you seeing it on the screen share. I see it, thank you. Yeah. Um, And and we'll send, send out a solicitation. Thank you Jennifer is trying to type in the chat



1:50:10

through the constant contact list that we used for the initial public public engagement survey. Great. Wonderful, thank you. Let's see your hand, and George. Yep.



1:50:27

Hi. Thanks again, and given the complexities of the project and the jurisdictions that that were highlighted. What sort of timeframe, would you anticipate it would take, from the time say there was agreement on a plan B, whatever it was. Till going through additional studies and 25% design and final design, construction, how many years are we talking about optimistically,



1:50:58

I wish we could give you an answer, George, I truly do at this point in time, because of the lack of funding availability for a project that we anticipate will be a pretty decent price tag. We don't really have an idea of what sort of future timeline we're looking at. It is a huge priority for us we have heard the community we see it as a great regional connection so it's definitely a priority in our funding requests and in our, you know, planning for projects, but at this time, We do not have a timeline.



1:51:36

Right. I would have said, you know, five years ago, the, the answer would have been one, you know, a very very long timeframe, but at the local, state and even federal levels now bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and alternative modes of transportation are really seeing a tremendous increase in support. So I'm actually feeling more optimistic than I that I have about this type of project. And I think, I think with not only the support, not only the community support. The, the support to date of the of the very Price Center folks, but but of many of the local area business interests that we have all the new developments that are that are, you know coming online. I really am feeling optimistic and I'm hopeful that in a handful of years, something could something could actually be in place. But that's that's just that's me dreaming.



1:52:46

I tend to agree that the start is tend to be aligning and and the change in the winds and all that. What I'm thinking is that, considering their developments moving forward the pace, perhaps, as the plans are starting to gel, they could dovetail with some of the developments going on and connecting paths to the greening Greenway could be part of the design from the beginning rather than just make it accessible later on. Yeah.



1:53:22

Yep, I think, you know, we really do need this need to get through this first step of understanding what is possible. If you know if our if our optimistic assumptions prove wrong when the numbers are run. You know we'll have to go back to the drawing board, but I think as soon as we have a sense of what the what the realms of of likely opportunity likely paths forward are, then I think we can start to really mobilize and and find ways to make it happen make this happen. But until we, until we know, no more than we know now, it's hard to hard to really get a bit in our teeth and run forward with it.



1:54:09

Thank you again for your efforts. Yeah,



1:54:11

thank you. Thank you, you, you were the initial impetus. The, the first. You're the first one who mentioned this the possibility of this project to me so



1:54:27

yeah, it's been a lot of years since we started down the path to the Greenway. It's over, over 10 years at this point. And it, it comes about. It takes time, but, but, eventually, you know things keep moving in the right direction and you get there.



1:54:44

Yep, so. Yep, indeed. Any other hands, not that I am seeing nor I VHB, or do you have any questions that you would like to



1:55:12

see the, are there specific categories of information that would be particularly helpful as you as you move forward. Are there insights that you would like to directly solicit.



1:55:30

I'm sure one more hair, and was raised too so I don't want to take up too much time. I think

we got a lot of good information in that survey I think a lot of it was there, I think, generally the open ended questions are good, what are your needs, what are your uses. And then looking at back at the presentation we we shared, whether its preferences for something you saw something you didn't like and some of those concepts shown and again the drawings that we provided were not intended to be, what we're going to be making our final selections from or anything I was just to illustrate a little bit about what could alternative one look like what may alternative to and alternative three look like, or scenarios one through three, sorry. And so if you have preferences for one of those, or special considerations. It's at least a little bit open ended there but I'd say all things are on the table as far as how can we accommodate you. If you have very specific questions or specific comments. That's something that, that we'll evaluate as well. Great. Thanks, Rhonda I'm gonna ask Jane to unmute.



1:56:48

I'm just simply going to say, I think the project's wonderful that's all I wanted to say. I loved it and I love the design of the span that just goes across without piles because you know we have so many, the number of the number of people using the outdoors and appreciating nature is just expanding and expanding, and we have, you know so many more canoers and kayakers on the river, and especially because DCR opened up another station right over there, off of Dedham road. Another put in point was a gentleman, Winchester, and I just think, I think it would be wonderful. I think it would just be a boon to everybody involved.



1:57:37

That's it. We love we love to hear the positive as well as the concerns. Thank you. I don't see any other hands. Why will. Were there any slides that anyone would like to go back and review. Do you see folks, dropping off quite a bit, that might be okay, right, Lucy. Am I unmuted. Yes you are.



1:58:34

Okay, I'd like some clarification of the drawing that has that shows the parking lot and the area that's leading right to the path, and then the sort of arched arch space, that to me, that's of concern to me it seems like it's a lot of Price Center and I'd like to know what, what that really is, is Lucy is is are you seeing the screen now is this the one you were no no not that one. No, it's, it's closer, much closer to the with the parking lot and you can see cars in it. Oh yeah, I guess that's it. Yes, it's just very small, yes that's it. That is it. Yes. Okay,

so I see black and brown on it, on the parking lot how big an area is that and what it, what is the black and what is the brown. So I'm going to unmute Scott so that he can jump back in on that.



1:59:28

Yeah, definitely. Um, so the Brown would be some type of landscape area in terms of what that actually is that would be something that we'd want to work with the berry Price Center to figure out that could have many different forms and shapes it could be actually planted shrubs. It's essentially a barrier. That way, you know, especially, you know cars can actually go through there in case someone's using the path that type of thing, it's more of a safety thing once you're on the path you're safe. We do show we do show a little bit of a cut through. And that's again something we can talk with the berry Price Center. Perhaps there's a cut through on the opposite side as well so you could go from one side of the path to the other on the property. Those are all things that we can work through with them. Part the black part, the black side, the black part will be asphalt, just regular pavement. That will essentially be your shared use path.



2:00:28

No, not that black part, the perpendicular to that poster Lucy that's the sidewalk, you have a sidewalk on Christina Street. Okay and we're on this drawing, if you can show me what the arrow does the price property and on the right, yep, right there. So see right there. Show, show. So, I guess, as far as I can see there should be some way to access that area. You know, not, not lose it to the ability of the people who might be taking a walk or people wanting to go into the shade is more shade there than anyplace else. So there needs to be a way for them to get there without having to go all the way around the landscaping.



2:01:18

Thank you for the note Lucy we will definitely add it that into our considerations.



2:01:22

Yep. And and we recognize that this is actively used by the Price Center for a snow storm for snow storage and snow equipment storage and the like. And so that's fully understood and will be respected.



2:01:35

Yeah, but how are they going to get the snow if you've got landscaping there how are you going to they're going to get the snow there



2:01:41

to lose it and when we say landscaping that that takes a lot of forms, it could be shrubs, but it could also be you know, tall grasses and that sort of thing things that are potentially going to die off in the winter and could be plowed over.



2:01:56

Okay, and also just thinking, you just mentioned tall grasses, there's an issue in my neighborhood where a house is wanting to be torn down the owner wants to tear it down, and he's not doing the lawn, and the city has said that attracts rats and because that house has rats now. So, maybe tall grass isn't a good idea. Thank you, Lucy, we



2:02:19

will definitely take it into consideration and ensure that we're meeting city requirements. Thank you. Thanks Lucy and Jan, I'm going to ask you to unmute. Jan Huffman. There we go. We should be able to hear you now.



2:02:41

I just like to pass along my thought about what happened in building the Greenway. We had everything pretty well planned out as to how we were going to build this, and the people who were going to do the work or bankrupt. And that could have easily stopped the whole project. And we had one person that I met at a city hall that made sure that it happened to that was our mayor said he won, and that person made such a difference in the his commitment to making the Greenway actually happen. If we can find somebody in City Hall, that has the same commitment level for the city resources as something to make sure this happens, we'll be very fortunate.



2:03:35

Thank you. That was indeed a challenging chapter that, ultimately, ultimately was worked

out.



2:03:46

Um, so, Brittany, you are going to be our I think probably with the timing our last public comment.



2:03:54

Hey there, I'm Brittany I use she her pronouns, I live in New in Highlands, only a few blocks away from this site, I just wanted to share general support for the plants. I used to use the path a lot,



2:04:04

or the connection a lot on bike and foot when it was open, so I'd be really excited for it to open up again, this time with railings on both sides. Um, so thank you so much to the project team for helping to make it happen. Thank you so much, Brittany.



2:04:24

All right, well with that folks may head out if they want. We are in sort of the last stretch of things here and I know it is that time for council budget discussions, which we did not want to conflict with, um, thank you all so much for attending, we really, you know, our main interest in this meeting was hearing from the public and we're so happy that so many of you could come and join us, and we look forward to sharing the next steps in what we're going to get from the scrap project.



2:04:57

Yeah, and please, for those of you who are on the constant contact list and receive the solicitation for input, please feel free to share the opportunity to with with with friends and friends and neighbors, the more insights we have, the better, the better the concept plans will be. So, so feel free to share, share our receptivity, whether it's Claire's email or the Constant Contact Us survey information or response information, we just we really look forward to hearing from you, so thank you once again. Thank you VHB for for a terrific presentation and we will be in touch very very soon. Okay. Thank you. All right.

