

# Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves Rehabilitation Project

## Project Background

U.S. Route 1 is a vital gateway between Boston and communities to the north. The roadway carries over 84,000 vehicular traffic per day in private vehicles, MBTA buses, and freight trucks. Route 1 passes through the City of Chelsea on two connected elevated structures:

- The Tobin Bridge
- The Chelsea Viaduct

By 2017, the two structures had been in operation for over 60 years and required significant repair and rehabilitation, with their condition requiring frequent maintenance work that impacted abutters and often reduced traffic capacity. MassDOT then began the process of planning, designing, and conducting public outreach for the rehabilitation of both structures. Rehabilitation of the Tobin Bridge began in 2018 while the Chelsea Viaduct project was still under review. In February 2019, the year rehabilitation of the Chelsea Viaduct was set to begin, MassDOT adopted a resequencing plan proposed by the project's general contractor, Skanska-McCourt, to match Tobin Bridge traffic management. The plan also included

coordination of a consistent northbound work zone, adding southbound work to the previously scheduled northbound work, and conducting most disruption during the daytime. The resequencing of the project sped up the construction schedule; reduced overlapping impacts on Tobin Bridge, Chelsea Curves, and North Washington Street Bridge projects; and reduced construction impacts on Route 1. MassDOT combined public outreach efforts for the Chelsea Viaduct, the Tobin Bridge, and eventually the North Washington Street Bridge because the three projects impact commuters traveling from the northeast towards Boston.

## Project Achievements

The Tobin Bridge portion was finished in January 2021 and all roadway impacts of the Chelsea Curves portion ended in July 2021. Full completion of all remaining activity for the Chelsea Curves is anticipated for October 2021.



Newly rehabilitated 5th Street On-Ramp. Photo: August 2021



# Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves Rehabilitation Project

## Tobin Bridge

Work for the Tobin Bridge project included steel and structural repairs, gutter repairs, reconstruction of ramps, and replacement of the upper and lower deck. Project achievements included:

- Repaved upper deck
- Replaced and repaved lower deck
- Repaired Everett Avenue, Beacon Street, and 4th Street ramps
- Restored Route 1 southbound and northbound within the project boundary to their full, 3-lane capacity
- Improved drainage on the bridge

Below the bridge structure, project achievements included:

- Established new and improved parking lot conditions underneath bridge
- Completed landscaping around the project boundary



Crews beginning re-pavement process. Photo: 2020



New parking lot underneath the Tobin Bridge. Photo: December 2020

## Chelsea Viaduct

With the Chelsea Viaduct project complete, both the inbound and outbound viaducts have new decks, new pavement, and the substructure of each viaduct has been strengthened. These repairs will decrease MassDOT's needs to perform maintenance on the viaduct, reducing impacts to both travelers and abutters. In addition, there are drainage and lighting improvements under the deck in the parking lots.

Project achievements on the viaduct include:

- The rehabilitation of northbound and southbound viaduct
- The rehabilitation of Arlington Street, Sixth Street, and Carter Street on-ramps
- The rehabilitation of the Carter Street off-ramp

Below and around the Chelsea Viaduct, project achievements include:



Newly rehabilitated northbound and southbound viaduct. Photo September 2021



Rehabilitated Carter Street Off-Ramp. Photo: July 2021





# Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves Rehabilitation Project

- Improved lighting, pavement, drainage, renewed markings in parking lots under the viaduct.
- Rehabilitated current and established new parking lot underneath viaduct
- Installed solid snow barriers on the viaduct
- Rehabilitated the embanked section of the Chelsea curves (between Spruce and Maple Streets)
- Resurfaced local roadways and reconstructed sidewalks where they pass below the bridge

## Public Outreach

Design phase outreach for the Chelsea Viaduct portion of the job began in 2017. For that work, the project team identified a broad range of stakeholders from large area employers to Chelsea-based community groups and worked to connect with these groups as well as individual Chelsea residents through public meetings, targeted briefings, direct mail, and flyer campaigns both in Chelsea and on the Route 111 bus.

Public outreach for the combined Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves project was brought together in the spring of 2019. This effort began with an ambitious set of seven public information meetings and three municipal forums ranging as far north as Newburyport and Haverhill respectively to alert the traveling public to the upcoming work and share with them the project's website and email list serve which would be used to provide them with accurate and up to date information about upcoming work and travel impacts on Route 1 over the Tobin Bridge and Chelsea Viaduct. During construction, the project team provided bi-weekly construction email and website updates, established a project hotline, placed dynamic message signs on roadways, and responded to public comments and questions on the project.

In addition, MassDOT established three different transit programs to help alleviate the project's traffic impacts: free inbound travel on the Silver Line from all bus stops



*New Carter Street Parking Lot. Photo: July 2021*



*Improved pavement markings and drainage underneath the viaduct. Photo: July 2021*



*New light fixtures for parking lots underneath viaduct. Photo: July 2021*

# Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves Rehabilitation Project

in Chelsea, users of the Commuter Rail were allowed to ride with a CharlieCard or CharlieTicket between Chelsea and North Station, and additional peak hour Blue Line trains were instituted to increase capacity. All three programs will end on **November 1, 2021**.

MassDOT remained committed to its outreach efforts even during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic related shutdowns in 2020. In March and April of 2020, the project team continued flyer campaigns and worked with Spanish language radio stations to alert residents of major lane shifts and other construction impacts. The outreach has become a model for efforts on the Sumner Tunnel Centennial project in East Boston.

On behalf of the Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves Rehabilitation Project team, we want to thank the Chelsea community and all others that have been impacted by the combined project for their patience throughout construction. It was through the work of the contractors and the cooperation of the community that the project was able to be completed on time despite challenging conditions. To those who attended public meetings and other outreach events, your comments made for a better project, and we have appreciated your continued interest in the projects.

We especially want to thank Susana Carella, a Chelsea resident, who has provided valuable translation assistance throughout the project. Susana has assisted in public meetings and in translating documents to ensure that all residents of Chelsea were informed about the Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves combined project.

## Stay in Contact

While the Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves Rehabilitation is ending, we encourage those impacted by it to engage with another MassDOT job, the [Sumner Tunnel Centennial Restoration Project](#). The Sumner Tunnel, built in 1934, requires full rehabilitation. The tunnel is a key piece of infrastructure for the Greater Boston-area as it brings southbound traffic through East Boston to Downtown Boston. Beginning in 2022, MassDOT will undertake work to upgrade the tunnel's electrical and life safety systems, repair its walls and suspended ceiling, restore the tunnel portals, and reinforce and repave the tunnel's roadway.

As with the Tobin Bridge/Chelsea Curves project, the goal is to make a substantial investment in the Sumner Tunnel to decrease the level of maintenance the asset needs, thereby reducing the impact of lane or full tunnel closures on the traveling public. Starting in Spring 2022, the Sumner Tunnel will be closing during the weekend. Then in Summer 2023, the tunnel will experience a full, 24/7, four-month closure between Mid-May and September

We encourage members of the public to share any comments or questions they have to the

project email: [Sumner100@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:Sumner100@dot.state.ma.us)

and sign up for [project email updates](#).



Newly replaced deck, new pavement markings, and installed snow fence. Photo: August 2021

