



**DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING  
APRIL 25, 2017**

**AT**

**BRIGHTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY  
COMMUNITY ROOM  
359 PLAINFIELD STREET  
SPRINGFIELD MA 01107**

**TIME 6:00 PM**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**NORTH END PEDESTRAIN PATH CONSTRUCTION (UNDER CONNECTICUT RIVER LINE RAILROAD)  
BETWEEN PLAINFIELD STREET & BIRNIE AVENUE**

**Project No. 607589  
Bridge Project Management**

**IN THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

**THOMAS J. TINLIN  
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, P.E.  
CHIEF ENGINEER**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION**  
**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Project File No. 607589**

A Public Hearing will be held by MassDOT to discuss the proposed North End Pedestrian Path Construction under the Connecticut River Railroad between Plainfield Street & Birnie Avenue in the City of Springfield, MA.

WHERE: Brightwood Public Library  
Community Room  
359 Plainfield Street, Springfield, MA 01107

WHEN: Tuesday, April 25, 2017 at 6:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed North End Pedestrian Path Construction project. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project will construct a fifty two (52) foot long concrete underpass of the existing railroad tracks together with a new five hundred and thirty (530) foot long fully-accessible multi-use path connecting to existing sidewalks along Birnie Avenue and Plainfield Street. The project will create a new fully-accessible crossing that will encourage pedestrian and bicycle access to area resources while also offering significant safety improvements for North End residents travelling between Birnie Avenue and Plainfield Street.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The City of Springfield is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be discussed at this hearing.

Written views received by MassDOT subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five (5) days prior to the date of the hearing shall be displayed for public inspection and copying at the time and date listed above. Plans will be on display one-half hour before the hearing begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project. A project handout will be made available on the MassDOT website listed below.

Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the Public Hearing regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Bridge Project Management, Project File No. 607589. Such submissions will also be accepted at the hearing. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked within ten (10) business days of this Public Hearing. Project inquiries may be emailed to [dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us](mailto:dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us)

This location is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), fax (857-368-0602), TTD/TTY (857-368-0603) or by email ([MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us)). Requests should be made as soon as possible prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten (10) business days before the hearing.

In case of inclement weather, hearing cancellation announcements will be posted on the internet at <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Highway/>

THOMAS J. TINLIN  
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, P.E.  
CHIEF ENGINEER



Dear Concerned Citizen:

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is committed to building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure that is both safe and efficient for all who use our roadways, bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, while maintaining the integrity of the environment.

As part of the design process for this project, we are conducting this public hearing to explain the proposed improvements, listen to your comments and answer any questions you may have. At the conclusion of the hearing, MassDOT will review all of your comments and, where feasible, incorporate them into the design of the project.

We recognize that road and bridge construction can create inconveniences for the public. MassDOT places a great deal of emphasis on minimizing the temporary disruptive effects of construction.

MassDOT encourages input from local communities and values your opinions. Please be assured that we will undertake no project without addressing the concerns of the community.

Sincerely,

Patricia A Leavenworth, P. E.  
Chief Engineer

## **WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?**

### **WHY A PUBLIC HEARING?**

To provide an assured method whereby the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can furnish to the public information concerning the State's highway construction proposals, and to afford every interested resident of the area an opportunity to be heard on any proposed project. At the same time, the meetings afford the Commonwealth an additional opportunity to receive information from local sources which would be of value to the State in making its final decisions to what design should be advanced for development.

### **WHY NOT A VOTE ON HIGHWAY PLANS?**

The hearings are not intended to be a popular referendum for the purpose of determining the nature of a proposed improvement by a majority of those present. They do not relieve the duly constituted officials of a State highway department of the necessity for making decisions in State highway matters for which they are charged with full responsibility.

### **WHAT DOES A PUBLIC HEARING ACCOMPLISH?**

It is designed to ensure the opportunity for, or the availability of, a forum to provide factual information which is pertinent to the determination of the final alternative considered by the state to best serve the public interest, and on which improvement projects are proposed to be undertaken.

It is important that the people of the area express their views in regard to the proposal being presented, so that views can be properly recorded in the minutes of the meeting. These minutes will be carefully studied and taken into consideration in the determination of the final design.

## RIGHT OF WAY ISSUES

A secure right of way is necessary for this project. Temporary construction easements may be required. Your municipality is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. If your property is affected, your rights are fully protected under law.

1. REASON FOR PROJECT

The completion of this project will serve local needs. The proposed enhancement will also be in the interest of others in the greater community, and provide for the public good.

2. WHO CONTACTS ME?

Representatives of the municipality have already contacted or will contact you. They will explain the procedures used in acquiring any necessary rights in land.

3. WHAT ABOUT DONATIONS? WHAT IS A RIGHT OF ENTRY?

Town officials will often seek donations, of parcels, where permanent rights are required. This procedure will minimize the acquisition cost for your community.

A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection, etc. The rights granted are temporary in nature.

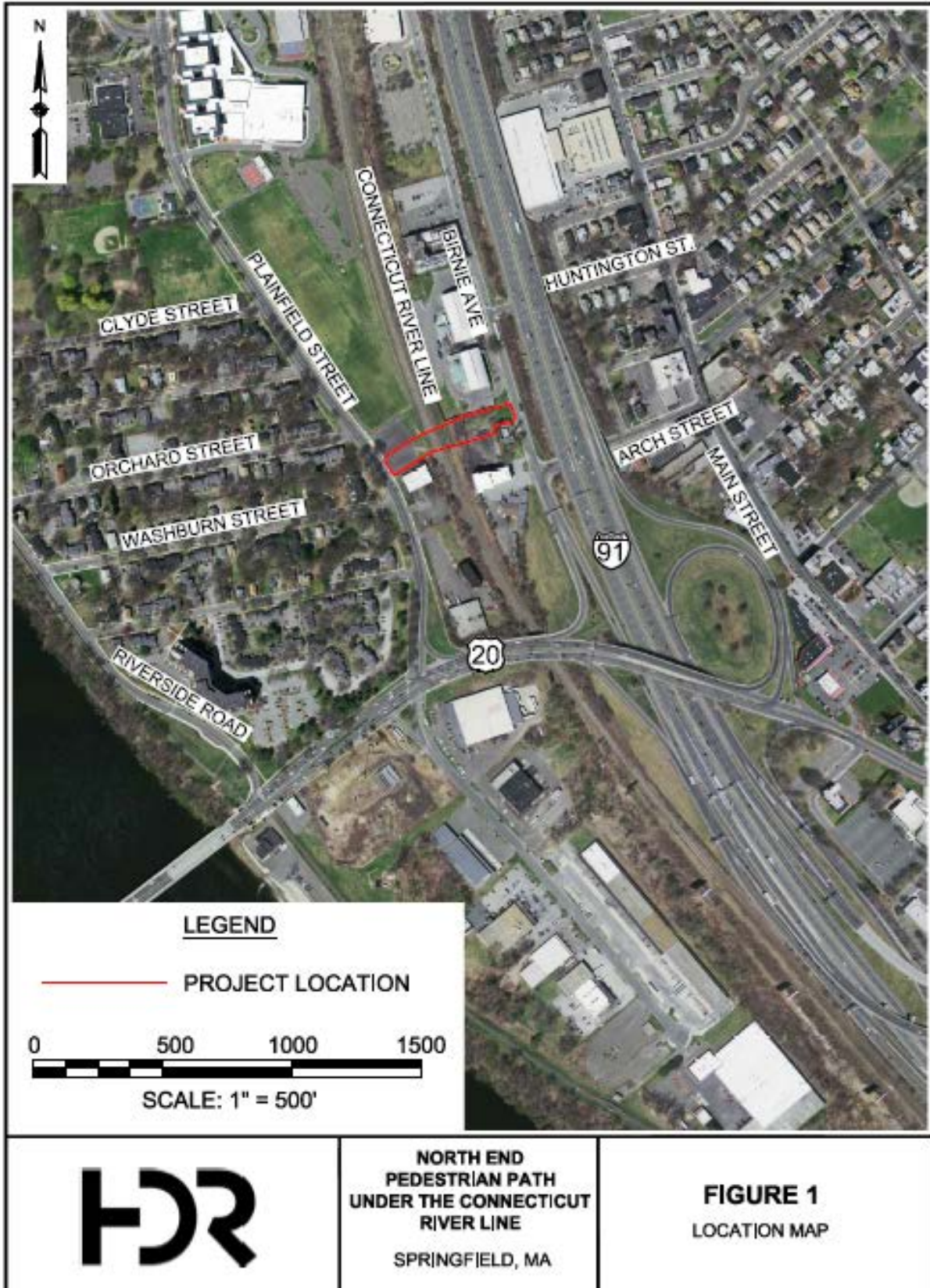
4. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ACQUIRED PARCELS?

In the event that donations are not considered, or completed, every effort will be made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded. Municipal and/or outside appraisers will complete an appraisal. Consideration is given to the type of rights needed, whether in fee, permanent or temporary easements. The appraisal will be the basis for arriving at a fair price (for damages that result).

5. MUST I ACCEPT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFER?

No, if the owner feels that the offer is not fair the owner may petition the courts. This action does not stop or delay the acquisition. The action must occur within 3 years. The owner(s) may be paid pro tanto (for the time being). The pro tanto payment will not prejudice the court's final decision.

# LOCUS MAP





## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **PROJECT LOCATION**

The project area, shown in Figure 1, is located between Birnie Avenue and Plainfield Street approximately 800-feet north of State Route 20 (West Street) and immediately south of the Roberto Clemente Fields and the Chestnut Middle School.

### **PROJECT PURPOSE**

The purpose of the project is to provide a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing and paved multi-use path beneath the Connecticut River Line Railroad and connecting to Birnie Avenue and Plainfield Street.

### **PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

The proposed project will provide a new fully-accessible, ADA-compliant, grade-separated crossing that will encourage pedestrian and bicycle access to area resources while also offering significant safety improvements to the current informal and dangerous at-grade east-west crossing between Birnie Avenue and Plainfield Street. There is currently a worn path at the proposed underpass location that acts as a de-facto at-grade crossing for walkers and cyclists, however, there are no crossing controls resulting in safety concerns. The informal crossing provides a popular link between the established Brightwood and Main Street neighborhoods in Springfield's North End that are otherwise forced to travel to the Route 20 link south of the site or further North to the Gerena Tunnel (only open from 8 AM - 8 PM, Monday - Friday). Nearby destinations served by this new crossing will include numerous civic, recreational and healthcare facilities as well as the Springfield public library and the Chestnut Middle School.

The new structure will consist of a fifty-two (52) foot long precast concrete underpass with concrete retaining walls that open outward to accommodate bi-directional pedestrian and bicycle traffic through the underpass. The project also includes the construction of a new five hundred thirty (530) foot long paved multi-use path with connections to the existing sidewalks along Birnie Avenue and Plainfield Street. The intended project also includes security provisions such as active and passive lighting, railing and bollards, as well as landscaping and a new mid-block pedestrian crossing of Plainfield Street.

### **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

All roadways in the project area will remain open to traffic throughout construction. Occasional short traffic disruptions may occur but every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience to the public. Pedestrian and vehicular access to abutting properties will be maintained at all times except for brief periods of time which abutters will be notified in advance.

### **RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS**

Permanent drainage, utility and walkway easements as well as at least four (4) partial property acquisitions and temporary construction easements will be required to accommodate the proposed improvements. The City of Springfield will be responsible for securing all necessary easements.

### **REQUIRED ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS**

Permitting for mainline track work was originally completed under MassDOT's Knowledge Corridor-Restore Vermonter project for overall improvements to the MassDOT rail line which resulted in the submittal of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to the Federal Railway Administration and ultimate Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for overall rail improvements. The project did not identify any construction for a pedestrian underpass in Springfield as part of its scope of work. As funding is being provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for this Project, a NEPA CE Checklist will be prepared in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement signed in April 2016. Since wetlands or rare species are not impacted by this Project, permits under Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, the MA Wetlands Protection Act, and the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act are not required.

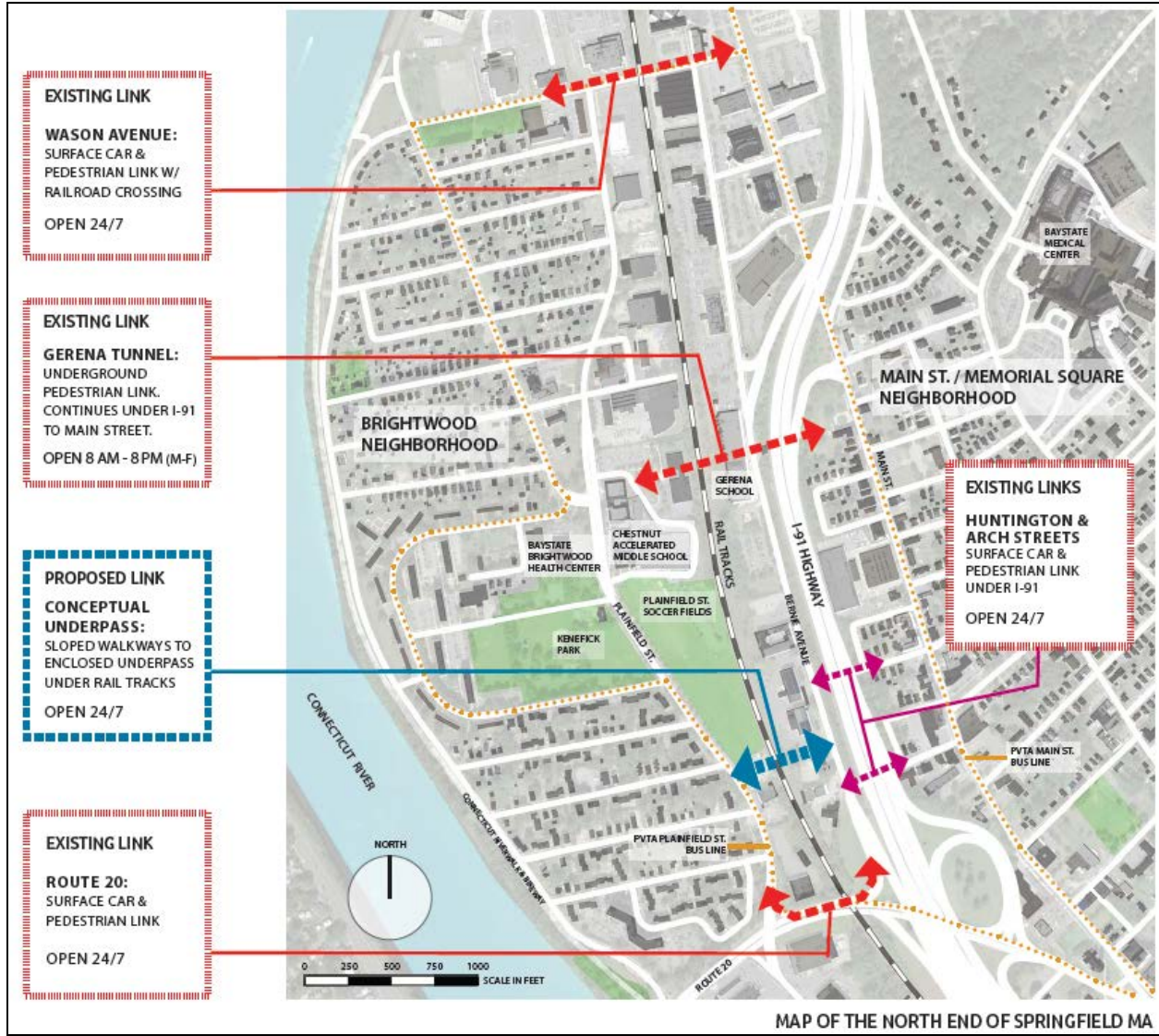
### **PROJECT COST**

The current estimated construction cost of this project is approximately \$6.7 million.

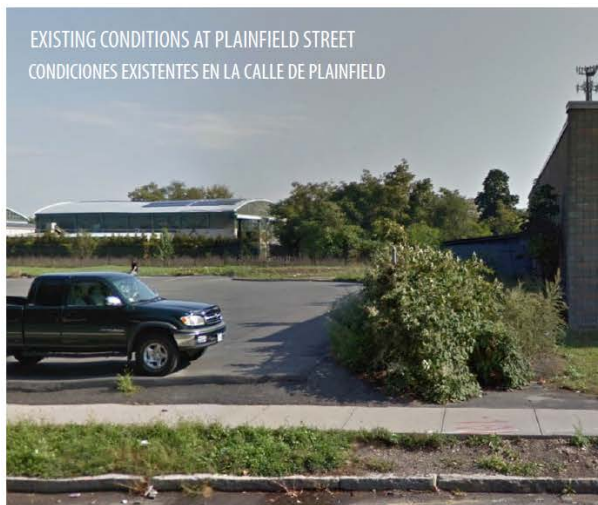
### **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

The design plans presented here are at the 25% design level. Comments made at this public informational meeting will be considered to the maximum extent feasible in the final design. Design is scheduled to be completed during the summer of 2018.

## MAP OF PEDESTRIAN LINKS AND TRANSIT CONNECTIONS



## CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF PROPOSED CROSSING & PATH





THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Springfield, MA  
North End Pedestrian Path Construction (under the Connecticut River Line Railroad)  
Project File No. 607589

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer  
MassDOT – Highway Division  
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973  
Attn: Bridge Project Management

The final date for receipt of written statements and exhibits for inclusion into the official public meeting transcript will be ten (10) days after the Public Meeting.

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please Fold and Tape



Please Place  
Appropriate  
Postage Here

Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E.  
Chief Engineer  
MassDOT – Highway Division  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Public Information Meeting  
NORTH END PEDESTRIAN PATH CONSTRUCTION  
**SPRINGFIELD, MA**  
Project File No. 607589  
Bridge Project Management

