

July 11, 2016

Dear Concerned Citizen:

In response to your comments and concerns related to the Padanaram Causeway Rehabilitation Project, we offer the following:

***Background:***

The project was initiated in 2000 and the Town entered into contract for the engineering, design and permitting with VHB Engineering Inc. The engineering design was funded by a Congressional earmark, with the balance of the earmark allocated to construction. As the project design and permitting evolved, it became apparent to the Town that the project had very little regional support. Over the years the project continued to rank low regionally due its geographical location and minimal regional benefit. The Town continued to seek regional funding and after 14 years, the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) and MassDOT recommended funding in 2014.

The project was advertised in September 2015 and bids were opened in December 2015. With a project cost of \$8,274,790, it was approximately \$2 million dollars over the engineering estimate. As a result, MassDOT performed a full review of the bid while simultaneously seeking additional funding for the project.

***Why is the project starting in the summer?***

As previously noted the project was delayed for several months while MassDOT evaluated the bid and sought additional funding. The project had originally been scheduled to start in the early spring of 2016. There are numerous environmental restrictions associated with the project. For example, no work is allowed in the water from January 1<sup>st</sup> until May 15<sup>th</sup>. If the Town had restricted work in July/August, the actual time when work could be performed in water would be limited to 5 months per year. More importantly, once the reconstruction work starts on the causeway it can only be reopened after all work is complete.

***Work should be completed in the shortest time possible.***

The design incorporates a significant amount of precast concrete and premanufactured guardrail to reduce labor and time associated with cast in place concrete and steel construction on site. As with any major construction project, the Contractor will work to reduce the time spent on site as delays will impact his profit.

***The bridge and causeway should be repaired at the same time to avoid future inconvenience.***

The Town had always intended to perform repairs on the bridge while the causeway was closed for rehabilitation. Unfortunately, \$342,145 of the \$543,000 originally programmed for bridge work was reallocated to the causeway by MassDOT when the causeway project came in over budget. It is still the Towns intent to complete work on the bridge while the causeway is closed for rehabilitation. The DPW is currently seeking replacement funding so the bridge work can

proceed.

***The project will impact small businesses in Padanaram and the detours will be an inconvenience for drivers. Why can't one lane remain open?***

The rehabilitation to the causeway is long overdue and there will never be a good time to close the causeway. We are optimistic that customers traveling from Smith Neck Road and points south will make the 7 to 10-minute detour to Padanaram. In comparison to most bridge detours, the Gulf Road/Russells Mills Road/Elm Street detour is considered minor.

Once work starts on the causeway, the existing guardrails will be removed preventing public access to the construction zone. The width of the causeway and means and methods of construction also make keeping one lane open impossible.

***The causeway should have been replaced with an elevated causeway to allow for better flow between the north and south harbors, and the bridge should be replaced at the same time with a new modern bridge.***

The issue of tidal exchange was studied by the Town several years ago. The study indicated that contrary to popular thoughts, the tidal exchange between the north and south harbors was very good. Further, design and environmental permitting for an elevated causeway was well beyond the ability of the Town or MassDOT to fund. The project does include new culverts under the causeway to hydraulically connect the salt pond at Smith Neck Road/Gulf Road to the north side of the harbor.

The Town had previously requested MassDOT fund \$25 million dollars for a bridge replacement and the request was denied. We also requested \$4 million dollars for a center pier replacement and we were denied. The Town does have a detailed rehabilitation plan for bridge repairs in lieu of a bridge replacement.

We acknowledge that the Padanaram Causeway Rehabilitation Project will be an inconvenience. As with all public works projects, the temporary inconvenience will yield permanent improvement.

Sincerely,  
**David T. Hickox, P.E.**  
*Director of Public Works*

**Lee M. Azinheira, P.E.**  
**Brian E. Hawes**  
**Mark S. Nunes**  
*Board of Public Works*