



Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

Craig Thomas
Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 08/14/18 BY COUNCILOR MERCIER
REQUEST CITY MANAGER HAVE DPD PROVIDE A DETAILED PRESENTATION,
JUSTIFYING HOW FILLING IN THE LORD OVERPASS WILL BE AN IMPROVEMENT
TO THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION PROBLEMS IN THE AREA

The goals of the Lord Overpass project include facilitating multi-modal access to the Hamilton Canal Innovation District, incorporating design elements that meet the City of Lowell’s Complete Street policy and improving the appearance and functionality of a major transportation gateway into downtown. Alleviating vehicular traffic congestion is not the primary focus. In 2015, the Lowell City Council adopted the Complete Streets Policy, in order “to create a multi-modal transportation system designed to provide improved mobility and accessibility opportunities for all users regardless of their age, income or ability. Multi-modal, within the context of this policy, includes automobiles, pedestrians, passenger buses, the trolley system, cyclists and freight modes of transportation.” Currently, the Lord Overpass does not adequately accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic, the overpass bridges are in need of replacement and the split grade design does not allow vehicular traffic to access Jackson Street and the new Courthouse.

The project has been developed iteratively and with ample public involvement to arrive at the current design. The initial concept did not alter the overpass and only impacted the intersection of Thorndike Street, Fletcher, Dutton and Jackson Streets; however, in the initial concept it was not possible for traffic driving under the overpass to safely access Jackson Street, which was a goal of the project. During the public involvement process, which began in February 2015 and continued through June 2018, the project went through three more design iterations, to arrive at the current concept, which greatly improves pedestrian safety and access. It also provides a much safer route for bicycle traffic, both of which enable the City to meet the stated goals of Complete Streets. The concept was presented to City Council on January 17, 2017 and was approved by a unanimous vote of 9-0. The 25% design was presented at an advertised public meeting on November 13, 2017. Since then, the plans have progressed to 100% design, which will be complete September 2018. The 100% design does not vary from what was presented to the Council or the public in 2016 and 2017.

DPD will provide a detailed presentation on the Lord Overpass project to the Council on 9/11/18.

DNT/ns
9/5/18

cc: Natasha Vance, Transportation Engineer

Lord Overpass Public and Stakeholder Participation Process

February 24, 2015	City Council Transportation Subcommittee public meeting regarding the redesign of the Lord Overpass as proposed in the HCID final environmental impact report and required in the subsequent MEPA permit for the District
November 16, 2015	Public Outreach Meeting #1: Community Discussion at Senior Center including members of the State Delegation, City Council, and over 100 residents
Winter 2015/201	Conducted public survey with over 115 responses
March 16, 2016	City Department Head meeting including DPW, DPD, LPD, LFD, Parking Department, City Manager's office, DPD, Engineering, LRWWU, LRWU, and others. Overwhelming support for filling in the Lord Overpass and including separate transit/emergency vehicle lanes
March 18, 2016	Road Safety Audit with LPD, LFD, MassDOT, DPD, LRTA
March 21, 2016	Meeting at UML with University and NPS staff
March 25, 2016	Meeting with CBA Board
March 28, 2016	Public Outreach meeting #2 held at Senior Center: presentation of community survey results, presentation of design concept alternatives, "Option 4" is developed with community input received at this meeting and via the community survey results
April 5, 2016	Lowell Sun publishes front page story on Lord Overpass realignment
April 13, 2016	Option 4 concept is presented and discussed with JAMBRA neighborhood group at their monthly meeting
August 9, 2016	Meeting with NMCOG and MassDOT District 4
November 17, 2016	Meeting with LRTA to discuss bus lanes
December 8, 2016	Option 4 concept is presented and discussed at Western Avenue Studios
January 17, 2017	DPD presentation of Lord Overpass conceptual design at City Council Transportation Subcommittee public meeting; option 4 is unanimously recommended by the subcommittee
January 17, 2017	DPD presentation of Lord Overpass conceptual design at City Council public meeting; option 4 is endorsed by a unanimous vote
March 3, 2017	Option 4 concept is presented briefly to Transportation Secretary Pollock and Lieutenant Governor Polito; option 4 is enthusiastically given the green light to proceed
April 12, 2017	Meeting with MassDOT in Boston; option 4 is approved for further design
May 31, 2017	Contract executed with MassDOT to provide \$1,853,576.77 in design funding to proceed with Option 4
August 12, 2017	Meeting with public and private utilities to coordinate all utilities during filling in of Lord Overpass
November 13, 2017	Public Presentation of Concept 4 at 25% design held at the Pollard Memorial Library
May 10, 2018	Lowell Bike Coalition/MassBike submits written comments to DPD
June 13, 2018	Response to Lowell Bike Coalition/MassBike comments sent; design plans updated to include modifications as proposed where appropriate

Option 4

