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ALLSTON BRIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE

## State unveils \$2.5m plan to upgrade Weeks footbridge connecting Allston, Cambridge

Posted by Matt Rocheleau July 15, 2013 03:32 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

State officials plan to start construction next month on a \$2.5-million project to improve accessibility along the historic John W. Weeks Footbridge, which spans the Charles River connecting Allston and Cambridge.

The project will include replacing stairs at either end of the footbridge with ramps. Those ramps, along with existing and new paths approaching the bridge, will be built at widths and slopes that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, officials said.

The plan also calls for installing new accessibility-compliant railings in front of existing, newly-repaired balustrades that run along each edge of the bridge, according to [a presentation](#) of the project that officials from the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation unveiled at a public meeting last week.

Other work will include: rebuilding some eroded sections of riverbank adjacent to the bridge; restoring historic lighting poles and masonry on the bridge; repairing gutters, drainage systems, parts of the underside of the bridge's arches; reconfiguring lighting around approach paths; and adding architectural lighting on the sides and underneath the bridge, the presentation says.

The latest plan is part of a multi-phase project to restore and renovate the 86-year-old footbridge while maintaining its historic character, officials said.

Construction is scheduled to begin in August and last about 18 months, according to the presentation. Most work will be done on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. There will be occasional weekend work.

No construction work will be done during the Head of the Charles Regatta rowing race in October, officials said.

Throughout construction, a section of the bridge, at least five feet wide, will be kept open so pedestrians can cross. During the project, at least two of the bridge's three arches will be kept open to boaters on the Charles River.

The project is being funded through the state's Accelerated Bridge Program. Harvard University has also partnered to help with design and construction,

including contributing about \$150,000, officials said.

In early 2012, crews completed another phase of construction along the footbridge. That \$500,000 effort repaired the original limestone balustrade handrails and replaced a portion of the navigational lights above each arch of the bridge.

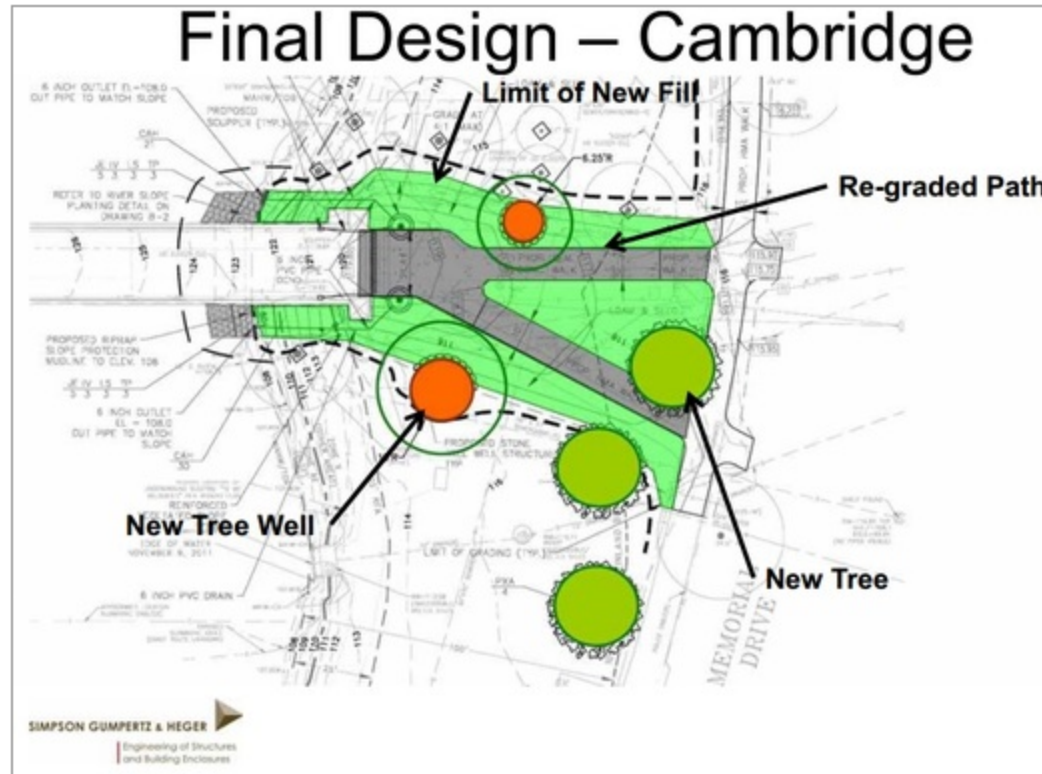
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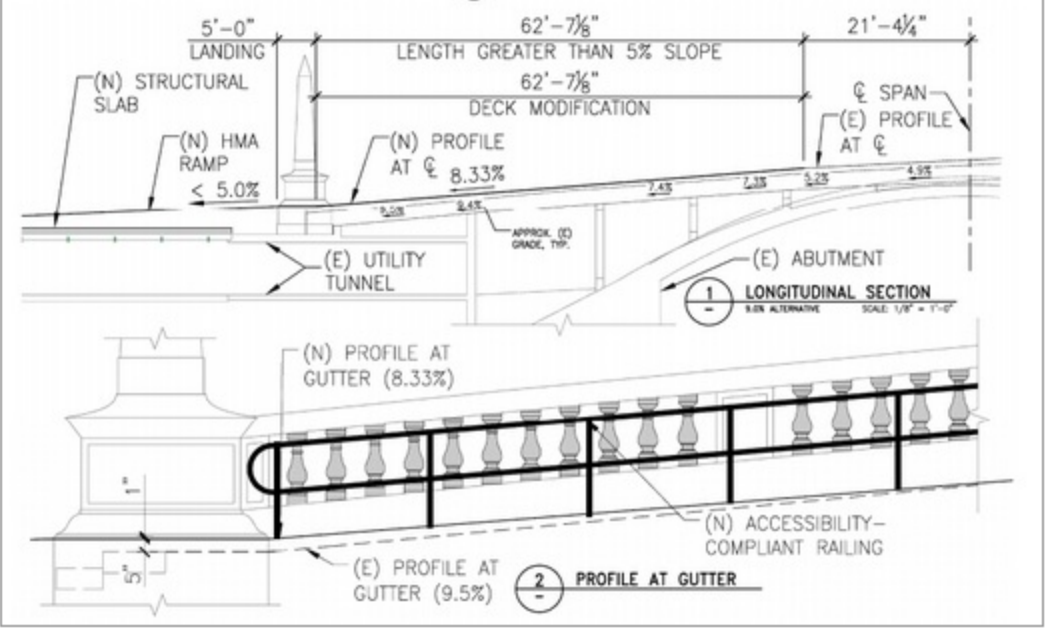
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