



# Falls Bridge Rehabilitation

## Frequently Asked Questions

March 2022

### 1. What are the major planned improvements on this project?

- Replace the existing floorbeams with new floorbeams having the same tapered shape.
- Replace the existing stringers and deck with a reinforced concrete deck.
- Narrow the travel lanes from 13' to 11' by introducing 2' shoulders, to calm traffic
- Replace the existing concrete sidewalks, keeping the curblines in their current locations.
- Restore the existing ornamental pedestrian railing on the structure and in the approaches.
- Repair the existing trusses with context sensitive details that stay true to the historical nature of the existing steel members.
- Clean all the exposed steel and repaint it the same color as the existing bridge – Starlight Blue with a Gloss Finish Coat conforming to Pantone System Number 12-4609 C.



- Replace the existing bearings with proposed high-load multirotational bearings to allow the bridge to flex and expand with changes in temperature.
- Rehabilitate the existing substructure units with masonry repointing.

### 2. What measures is the City taking to preserve this historic bridge?

We at the City are proud of this significant structure. We approach every design decision with an eye towards doing justice to the original City engineers who made this river crossing a reality. We understand the intricacies of this structure and how its history is woven into the fabric of East Falls and Fairmount Park.

We have begun coordinating with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Philadelphia Historical Commission to ensure that each detail of this repair is being considered in the context of its impact to the historical character defining features of this bridge. As the consulting party process advances this year we will be reaching out to community groups and adjacent property owners, giving them an opportunity to tell us what they cherish about this structure and soliciting their input on any design details that affect the historical features of the bridge.



## Falls Bridge Rehabilitation

### Frequently Asked Questions

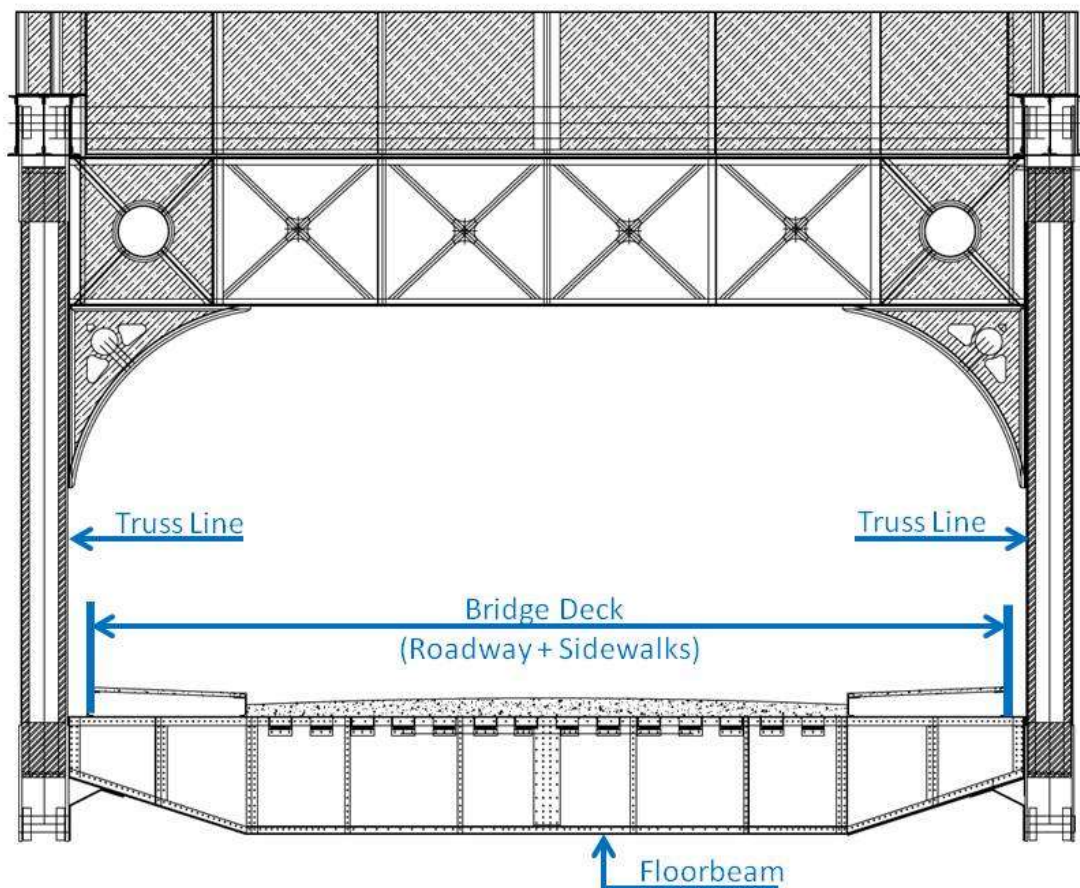
March 2022

#### 3. How long the bridge will be closed for construction?

Two (2) years.

#### 4. Why must the bridge be closed during construction?

The bridge deck is supported by a series of floorbeams which span between two steel truss lines (see photo below). Accommodating traffic during construction would require the bridge deck, and therefore the floorbeams, to be replaced in at least two stages. Replacing the floorbeams in stages would require temporary supports – either towers in the river below or hangers from the truss above. Constructing these temporary supports would be significantly more expensive and would greatly extend the construction timeline.





## Falls Bridge Rehabilitation

### Frequently Asked Questions

March 2022

#### 5. What steps are being considered to minimize the traffic impact during construction while the bridge is closed?

- Although we will use construction methods, such as prefabrication, to shorten the construction timeline, the reality is that traffic will be disturbed for 2 years while this bridge is closed
- This closure will apply to everyone crossing the bridge – pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.
- Buoys will be placed in the river to navigate recreational boaters through the construction area.
- Detour signs will be installed to divert vehicular traffic to City Avenue.
- There is no viable detour route for pedestrians and cyclists. The nearest fully-accessible river crossing is the MLK Jr. Drive Bridge, 4 miles downriver.
- We sincerely hope that recreational users will adjust their routines and that commuting cyclists can adjust their individual routes during the bridge closure while we work to expeditiously reopen the crossing to all users.
- The trails along either side of the Schuylkill River will remain open throughout construction.
- Kelly Drive and MLK Jr. Drive along either side of the Schuylkill River will remain open throughout construction.
- Falls Bridge will not be closed for construction until construction on the MLK Jr. Drive Bridge is complete – both bridges will not be closed at the same time.

#### 6. Are there any changes being proposed to the sidewalks & railing?

There will not be any changes to the sidewalk widths. The proposed curb will be placed in the same location as the existing curb. The existing railing will be removed, cleaned, painted off-site, and reinstalled. Any damaged parts of the railing will be replaced in kind.

#### 7. Are there any improvements being proposed for bicycle infrastructure?

Due to historical nature of the bridge and its structural system, we cannot increase the width of the bridge, nor can we shift curblines and traffic lanes from their current position. With these constraints, we cannot provide bicycle facilities on the bridge.

#### 8. Are there any proposed changes to the traffic lanes?

The overall width of the roadway – from curb to curb – will remain the same in proposed condition, but the traffic lanes will be narrowed from 13' to 11' by introducing a 2' wide shoulder to calm traffic, improve roadway drainage, and to provide a larger buffer between motorists and the sidewalks.



## Falls Bridge Rehabilitation

### Frequently Asked Questions

March 2022

#### **9. Will there be any improvements to the bridge lighting?**

The decorative lighting on the bridge is owned and operated by the East Falls Development Corporation. It will not be upgraded as part of this project. The bridge contractor will coordinate around these decorative lights so as not to disturb them.

The overhead street lights that illuminate the roadway are owned and maintained by the Philadelphia Streets Department. These overhead lights were upgraded to LED luminaires in 2016. The quantity, location, and brightness of these street lights will not change.

#### **10. What measures have been considered to minimize environmental impact?**

We are coordinating with local, state, and federal agencies and will obtain all required environmental permits and approvals for environmental clearances. The contractor will build a containment system to encapsulate the bridge during construction to avoid pollution of the river.

#### **11. How can I reach out to project team if I have any question regarding project?**

You can get in touch with us via the project email address: "Falls.bridge.rehab@Phila.gov"