

Art Commission Review – Submittal Form

(Applicant complete below section)

Project Name: Falls Bridge Rehabilitation

Project Address: 4268 Ridge Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19129 **On Public Property?** Yes No

Total Budget: \$35-40Million **Utilizing City Funds?** Yes (specify amount): _____ No

Project Type (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building – New Construction or Addition | <input type="checkbox"/> Encroachment in/over ROW |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building – Renovation or Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage (Reconsideration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plaza/Park/Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Streetery (Reconsideration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Art | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Bridge Rehab</u> |

Project Team:

Agency/Org.: JMT Design Lead (firm): JMT

Other: PM: Ryan McCarthy PE, (rmccarthy@jmt.com)

Primary Contact for Project Communications:

Name: Ankitkumar Patel

Affiliation: Streets Department

Email: [REDACTED]

(Art Commission staff complete below section)

Art Commission Meeting Date of Project Review: 4/8/26

Level of Review:

Concept Review Final Review If Final, specify date of preceding Concept Review: _____

Administrative Review (for projects with minimal visual impact on public realm)

Staff Notes (Optional):

Rehabilitation of existing historic bridge



March 25, 2025

Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: Falls Bridge over Schuylkill River
JMT Job No. 19-00242-004
SEPTA GEC 21F-04

Members of the Philadelphia Art Commission:

Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. (JMT) and Department of Streets are requesting to be placed on the April 8th, 2026, Art Commission meeting agenda to present design of the Rehabilitation of Falls Bridge over Schuylkill River. The City owns and maintains the bridge structure. JMT is the engineer of record for the project.

Project Information:

The City of Philadelphia is proposing to rehabilitate Falls Bridge over the Schuylkill River. The funding for this project is split between two phases. The design phase uses 80 percent state funds and 20 percent local funds. The construction phase uses 80 percent federal funds, 15 percent state funds, and 5 percent local funds.

Falls Bridge (City Bridge #4) was built in 1895, and is a 564-foot, three-span, Petit through truss/floorbeam/stringer bridge. It was added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2022. The Philadelphia Historic Commission is aware of this project and has provided administrative approval. Dr Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D conveyed approval to Katherine Liss with the Art Commission on March 12, 2026.

Project Scope:

The proposed scope of work includes the following:

- Removal of the existing sidewalk, deck, stringers, floorbeams, and bottom lateral bracing of the existing bridge.
- The reconstruction of the concrete sidewalks and deck atop replacement floorbeams (the new deck system will not require stringers).
- The replacement bottom lateral bracing and replacement bearings.
- Steel repairs to select truss members and pins.
- Repainting the existing superstructure steel in uniform color.
- Minor substructure rehabilitation throughout.

-
- Full depth roadway reconstruction and limited repaving, curb, and sidewalk reconstruction.
 - Riprap at pier bases and below water level to prevent scour.
 - Guide rail replacement at the southwest corner.
 - Restoration of the existing ornamental pedestrian railing on the structure and along the approaches. The restoration will include removing, cleaning, repairing, replacing parts in-kind as needed, repainting, and reinstallation at the same height as existing.
 - Street lighting improvements.

The bridge will be closed for repairs. A vehicular traffic detour plan and ATON (Aids to Navigation) plan for boat traffic have been developed for the project.

Should there be any updates we will provide notes with imagery on submission by April 1st, 2026. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 443-528-7840 or mgrabenstein@jmt.com.

Very truly yours

Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc.

Michael Grabenstein, AIA
Project Manager

Falls Bridge Rehabilitation

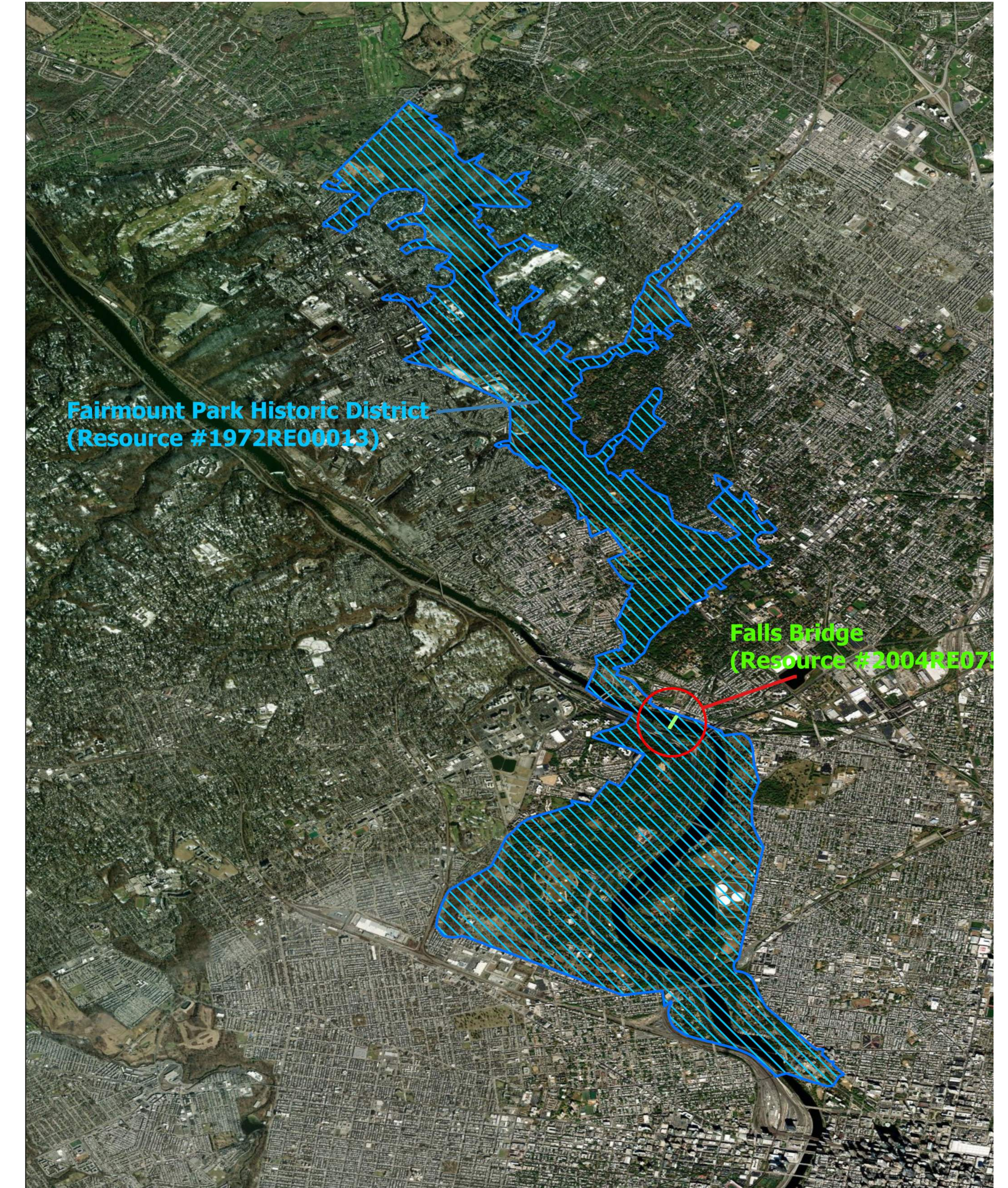
Philadelphia Art Commission Presentation
April 8th, 2026



History of the Falls Bridge



- Existing truss, built in 1895, is a variant of the Pratt truss form known as the Baltimore (Petit) truss
- This is the eighth iteration of the bridge. Earlier bridges at this location spanning 1808-1878 were destroyed by wind, snow, ice, damage from a cattle herd, and even a collision with another bridge!
- Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The NRHP boundary for the bridge is its footprint and includes the decorative pedestrian railings along the sidewalk that extend from each portal.



The PA SHPO concurred with PennDOT's Section 106 determination of *No Adverse Effect* to the NRHP-Eligible Falls Bridge (Resource #2004RE07542) on September 26, 2024.

Historic Petit Through Truss

- Petit truss developed in 1871 by Baltimore, Ohio, and Pennsylvania Railroad engineers
- Additional strut and hangers
 - Allows taller truss
 - More frequent floorbeams
 - Shallower deck
- Falls Bridge unusually large and heavy due to original design including an upper bridge deck



Falls Bridge Existing Conditions



Bridge Background:

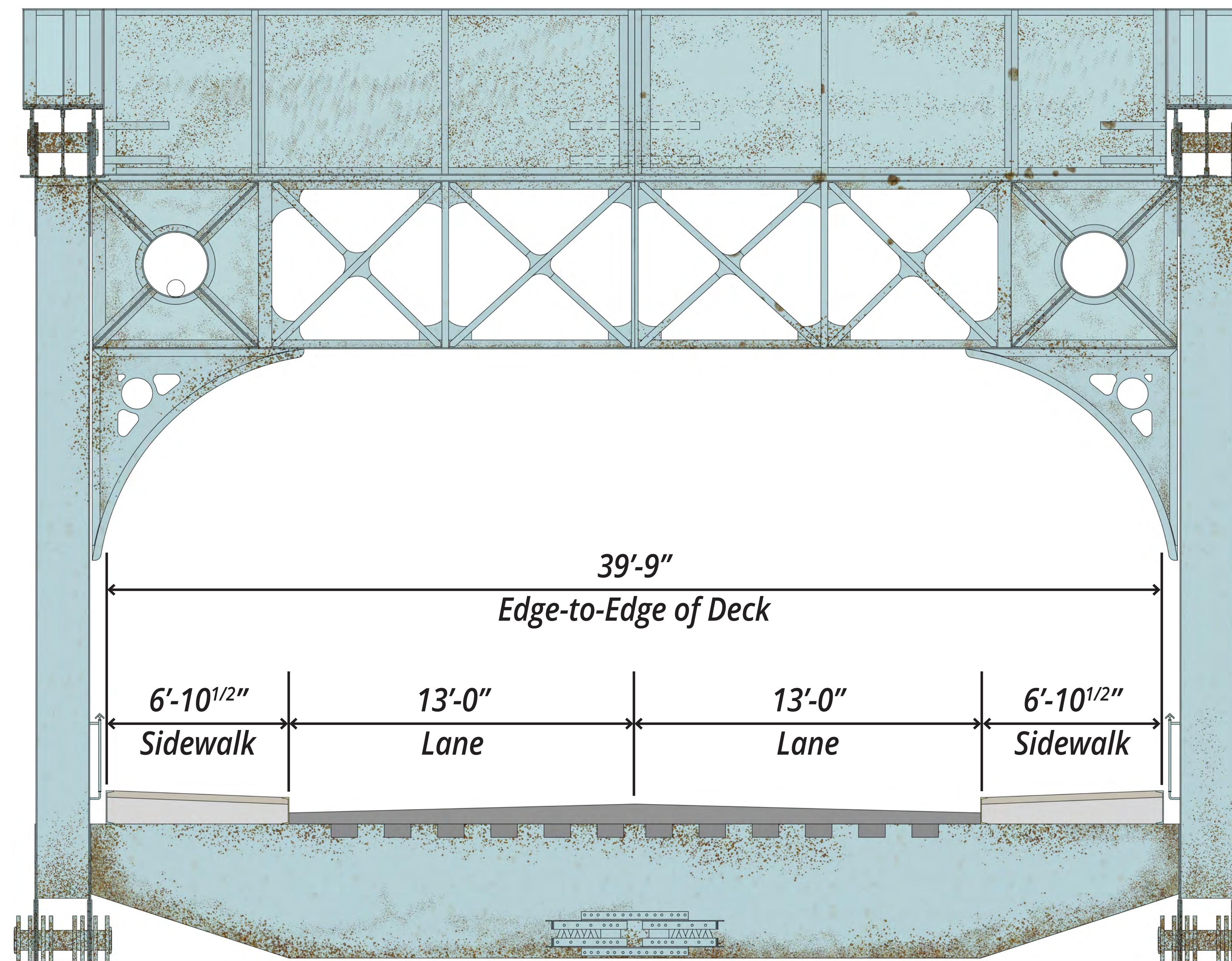
- Total Bridge Length: 554' -3"
- 3 Spans
- Span Length: 180'
- Width: 26' (curb to curb)
- Sidewalk width: 6'-10.5" (both sides)
- Originally built in 1895
- Type: Steel Petit through truss/ floorbeam/stringer
- Repair/Rehab in 1973, 1986, 1997, 2007, 2015, 2017, 2023

Current Condition:

- Inspected 1/23/2025
- Poor condition
- 3 Ton weight restriction
- No trucks or buses
- Emergency vehicles permitted

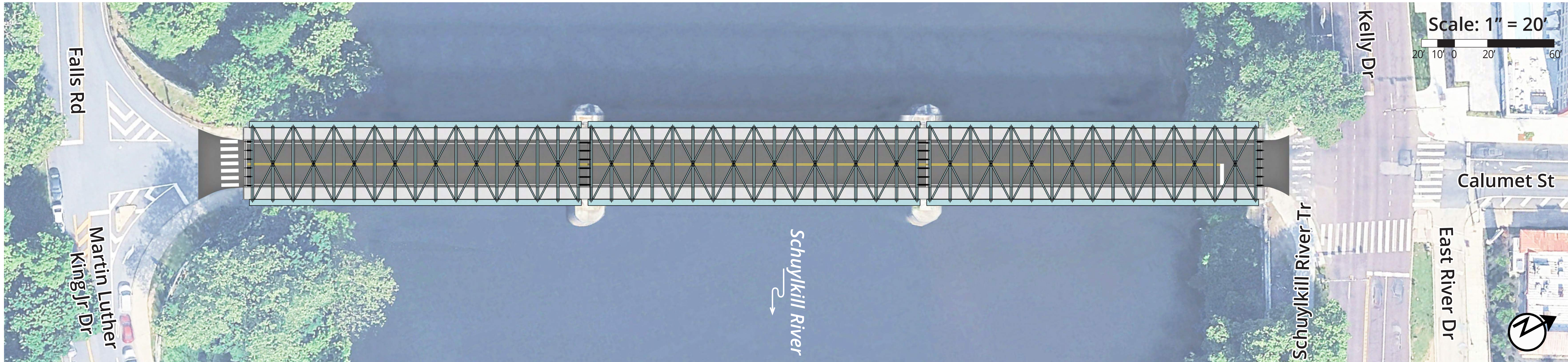


Bridge Typical Section

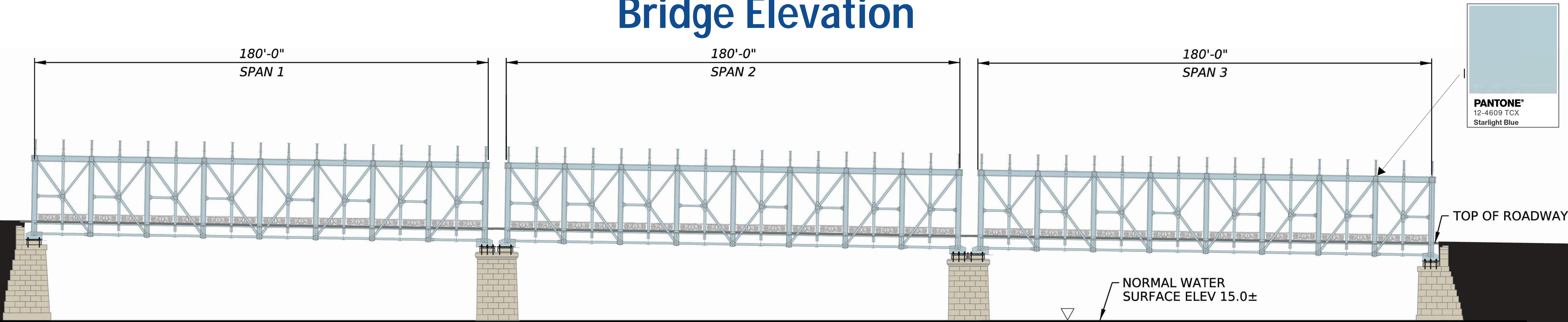


Falls Bridge Proposed Conditions

Bridge Plan



Bridge Elevation



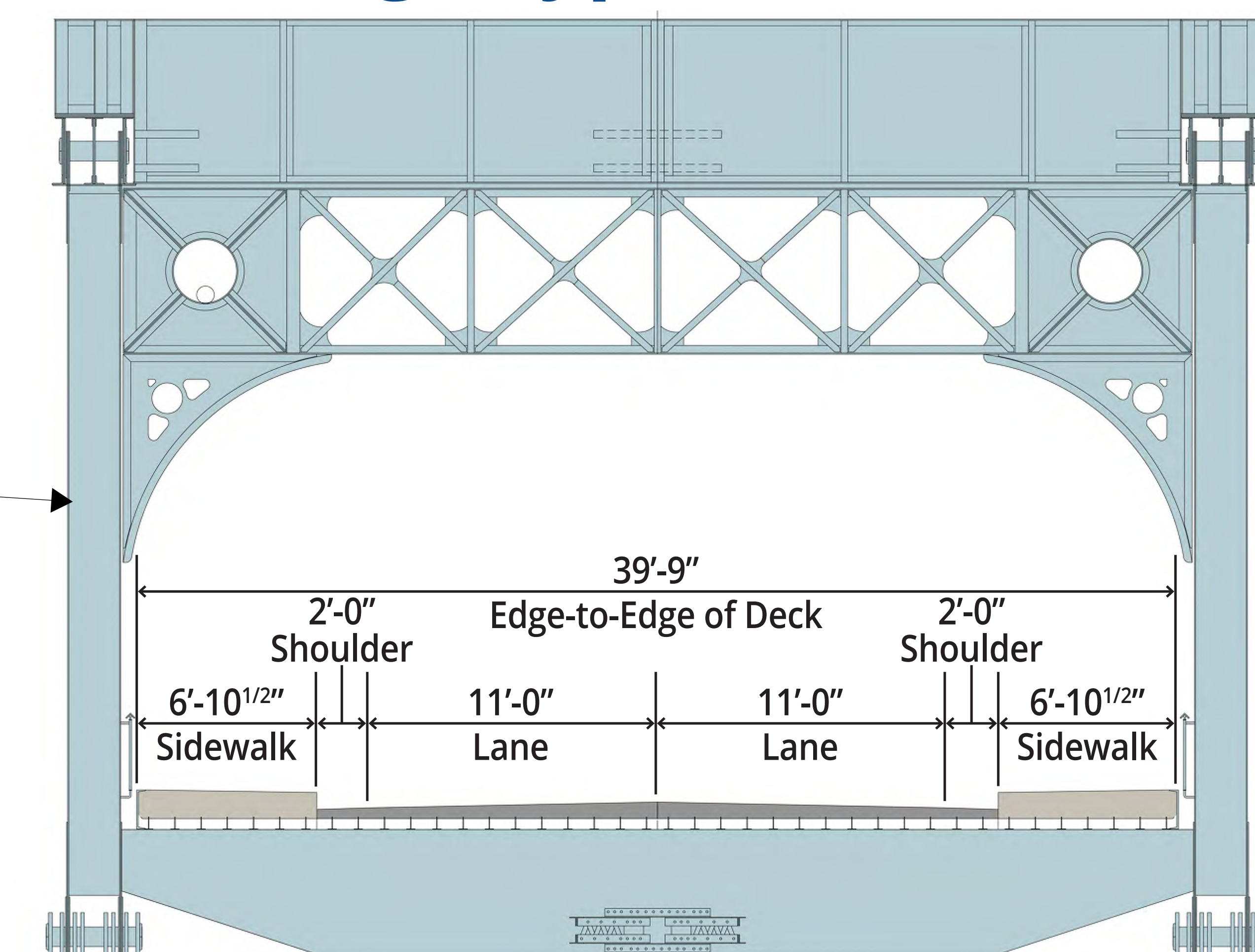
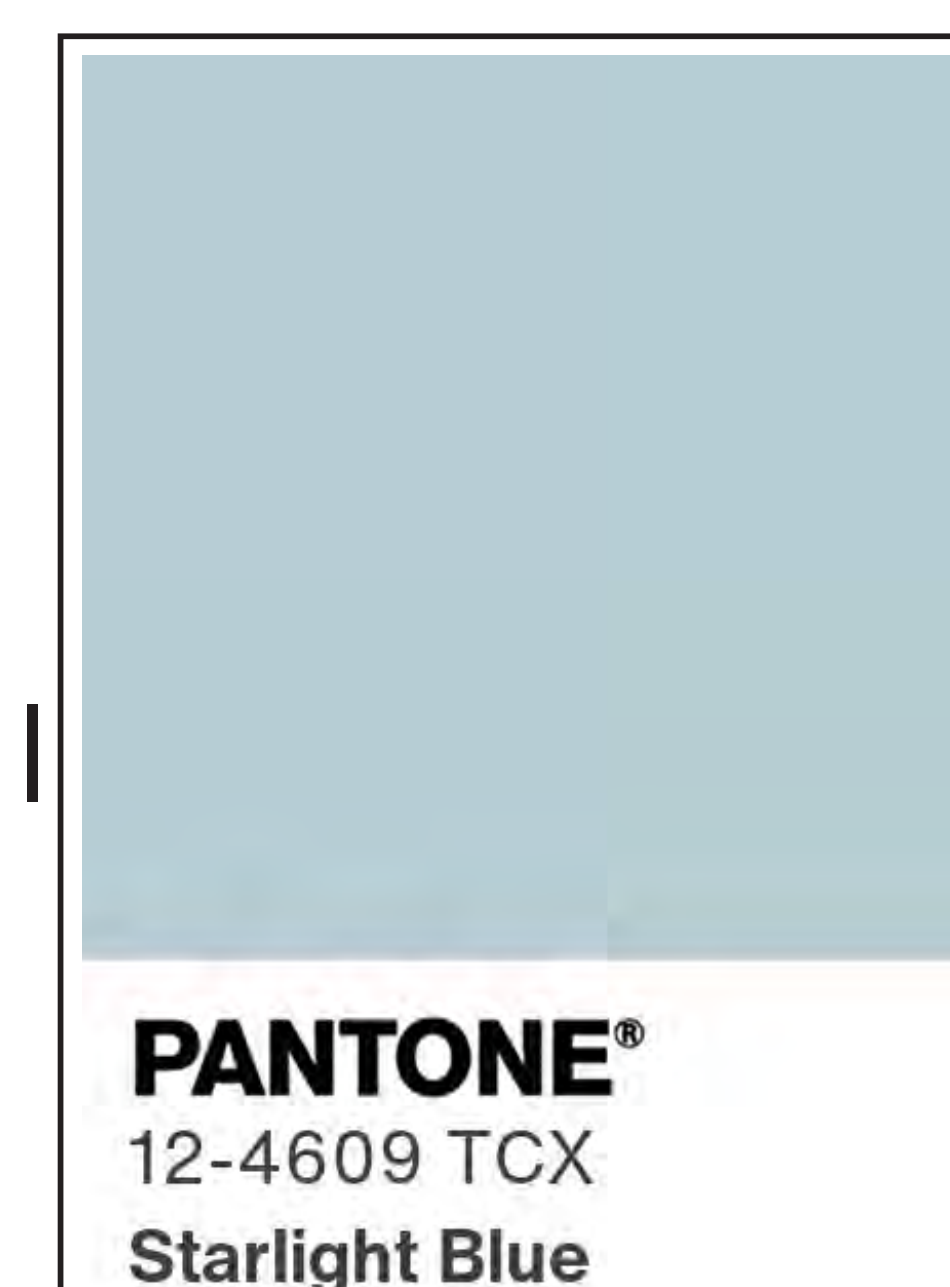
Falls Bridge Proposed Conditions



List of Project Improvements:

- 1 Upgrade original bearings with modern-day bearing pads
- 2 Repair, clean, and paint existing truss members in kind to match the original Starlight Blue color
- 3 Test and repair truss pin connections
- 4 Improve bridge drainage system
- 5 Clean and repoint masonry piers and provide scour protection at base of piers
- 6 Reconstruct bridge deck, deck joints, approach roadways, and the sidewalks
- 7 Replace original floorbeams under the bridge deck, matching the historic shapes
- 8 Restore the historic ornamental railing
- 9 Restripe roadway, add shoulder, and narrow lanes to 11'

Bridge Typical Section



Vehicular Detour Map



Intersection Detail Legend

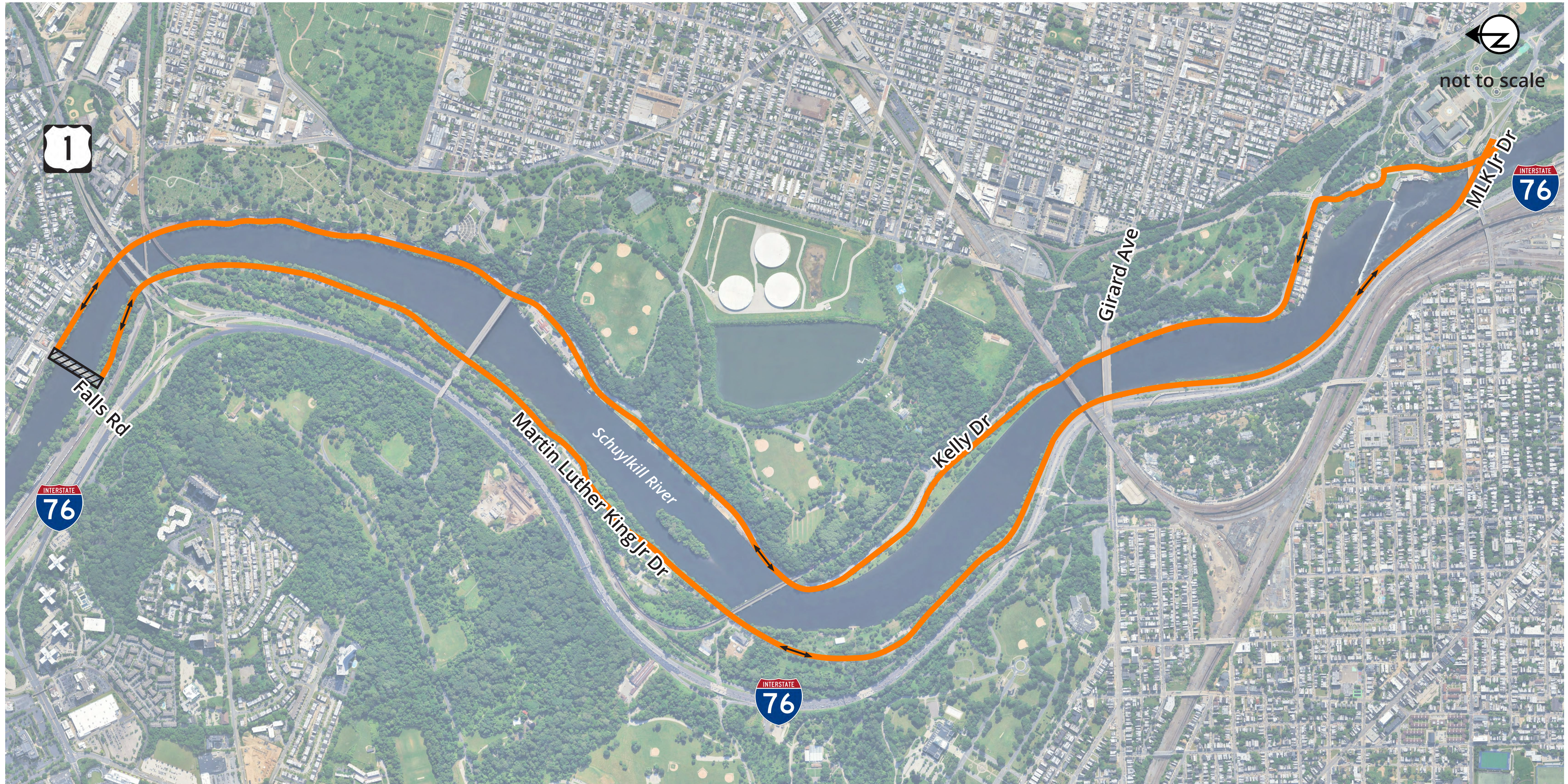
- Work Area
- Traffic Flow
- Barricades
- Traffic Barriers

not to scale

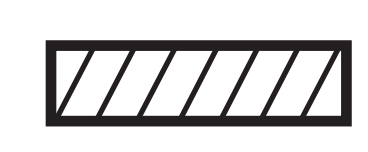


Legend

- Work Area
- Direction of Traffic
- Eastbound thru traffic Detour Route - Falls Rd (1.9 miles)
- Westbound thru traffic Detour Route - Falls Rd (1.9 miles)

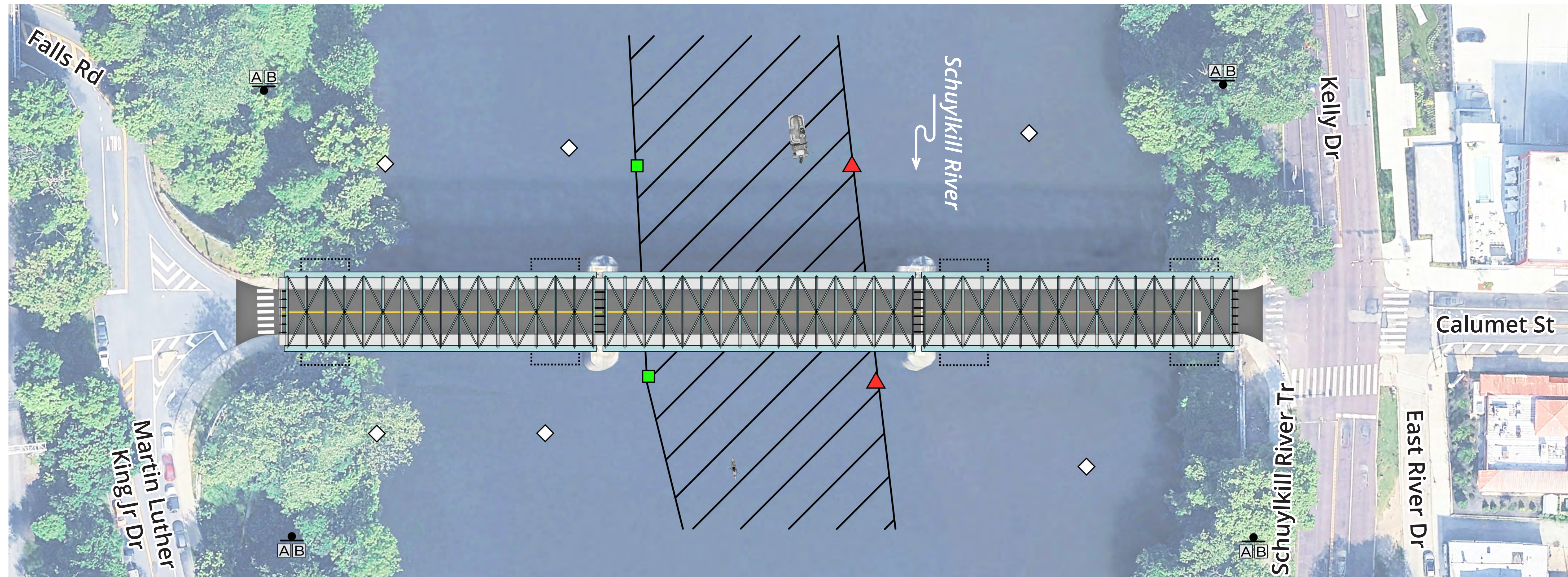
Bicycle and Pedestrian Detour Map



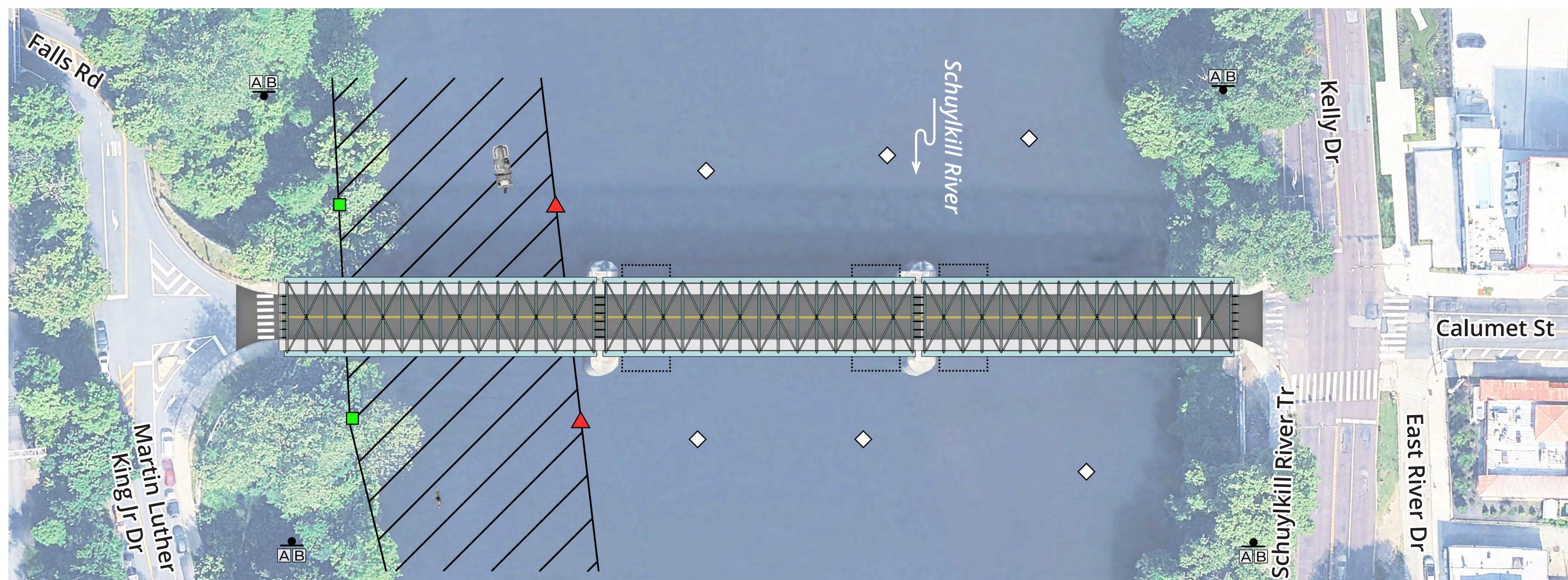
Legend

-  Work Area
-  Detour Route - Falls Rd (8.1 miles)
-  Direction of Traffic

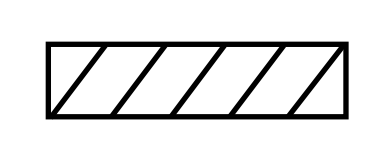



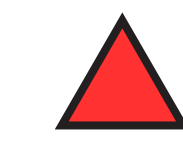
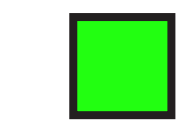

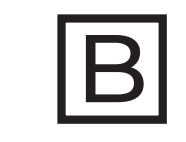
Aids to Navigation (ATON) Detour Plan - Phase 1

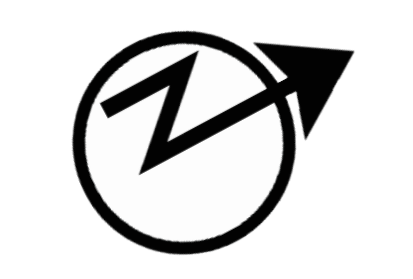


Aids to Navigation (ATON) Detour Plan - Phase 2



Legend

-  Safe Waterway Opening
-  ATON Location
-  Barge Location
-  White "Boats Stay Out" Buoy
-  Red Channel Buoy
-  Green Channel Buoy
-  Warning Sign
-  No Wake Sign



not to scale

Anticipated Remaining Project Timeline

Estimated Falls Bridge timeline, 8/2025

	2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				
	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	
Final Design		█																			
Public Outreach, FD		█																			
Reopen MLK, Jr. Drive Bridge			█																		
Falls Bridge Maintenance					█																
PGA Tour, FIFA World Cup, MLB All-Star Game, Semiquincentennial						█															
Open Contractor Bids							█														
Offsite Construction							█														
Detour & Onsite Construction								█													