

Northern Avenue Bridge: Bridging History and Innovation

A Fresh Start

Pictured left are preliminary designs of the new Northern Avenue Pedestrian bridge. The design is meant to be simple and elegant, with a forward cantilever and gate-swing opening. The cantilevered tower portion “leans” into the skyline of Boston, while also connecting the gap between the rapidly developing Seaport and Downtown Boston. The bridge takes inspiration from the *Puente de la Mujer* bridge in Buenos Aires, designed by world renowned architect, Santiago Calatrava.

*note: the rendering includes the existing Northern Avenue bridge, which is planned to be removed.

This unique design is intended to improve mobility for pedestrians in the Seaport and boat traffic in the Fort Point Channel. The bridge swings open for boats to pass through, and while this may temporarily inhibit pedestrian and bike travel, a gate-swing bridge avoids possible design issues on both ends of the bridge, where the vertical and horizontal approach may cause complications with surrounding buildings and roads, as the height of the bridge does not need to be as high if there was no swing.

The images below portray where the bridge would swing and how appear aesthetically. The design of this bridge represents progress while remembering history, as the bridge has a modern design, but swings open, like the bridge that has stood there for decades.

Remembering the Past

It is essential that Boston, one of the oldest cities in America, preserves its history, but it is also important that it promote developments and designs for the 21st century. This project would do both.

Pictured right are renderings of the preserved bridge. While the project faces many engineering and design challenges, the project connects two parcels of the greenway that are arguably disconnected today. The design calls for the construction of a platform over parcel 12, where two exit ramps for the Central Artery enter and exit the city streets. Most of the restored bridge is transformed into retail space, a restaurant and cafe, and green space. Public art installations can be placed throughout the parcel, including the structural wall that runs along Cross Street and on various green spaces throughout the parcel.

It is also important to note that this parcel has been under consideration for the construction of a history museum. With slight changes in the design, this historic bridge can potentially house Boston’s past for many years to come, thus honoring the rich history of Boston

