



Department of
Transportation

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

www.dot.ny.gov

STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP ON THE I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

I-81 Viaduct Project Director Mark Frechette Retiring, Handing Over Duties to Successor Elizabeth “Betsy” Parmley

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez today announced the retirement of I-81 Viaduct Project Director Mark Frechette, P.E., who was a key member of the team at the Department of Transportation in Central New York and the North Country for more than 35 years. For the past 10 years, Mark has served as Project Director of the I-81 Viaduct Project, working countless hours in coordination with the Central New York community to lead the project from its initial conception and design through the Record of Decision and first contract award on January 12.

Over the past two years, Mark has worked closely with his successor, Elizabeth “Betsy” Parmley, P.E., who joined the I-81 project team in 2021 as a Project Manager. Betsy brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to her new position as Project Director for I-81. She began her career with DOT in 2005 as a Junior Engineer and worked her way up to lead DOT’s Central New York Traffic Safety & Mobility Group, before officially joining the I-81 Viaduct Project team.

As the first female Resident Engineer in DOT’s Central New York region, Betsy led a staff of approximately 40 highway maintenance workers at the Onondaga West Maintenance Residency. During her tenure at DOT, Betsy has also held key roles on several high priority regional projects, managing and coordinating each from development and design all the way through construction. These projects include the \$38 million transformation of the New York State Fair Orange Lot; a \$3 million project to widen Exit 7 off interstate 690 west; a \$10 million project on state highway improvements to accommodate the construction of del Lago Resort & Casino; and a \$7 million Bridge Street gateway project connecting the Village of Solvay to the New York State Fairgrounds. Betsy has built strong relationships in Central New York with elected officials and members of the community, addressing safety and traffic concerns related to projects around the region. A graduate of Bucknell University, Betsy began her career in New York City before moving to Central New York and working for Clough, Harbour & Associates. Betsy’s depth of experience and demonstrated strong leadership skills will be instrumental in the successful completion of this historic project.

State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez said, “With 37 years of outstanding service to New York State DOT, Mark Frechette has been retirement eligible for some time now, and the fact that he decided to stay on through the approval of the Record of Decision and the first

contract award for the I-81 Viaduct Project speaks volumes about his commitment to public service, Central New York and his good character. I congratulate Mark on a stellar career and a legacy that will long endure. Regardless of the challenges put in front of him on this – the largest project in DOT history - Mark was unflappable, always cheerful, positive, and believing with all his heart that we would work with the community to develop the best possible transportation solution for the City of Syracuse and Central New York. The entire DOT team is grateful for his service and wishes Mark the very best in his well-deserved retirement.”

“While I am sad to see Mark go, the I-81 Viaduct Project continues to move forward and I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Betsy Parmley as the I-81 Viaduct Project Director,” Commissioner Dominguez continued. “Betsy is an experienced and seasoned professional engineer with nearly two decades of proven leadership at DOT. As Mark’s protégé on the I-81 Viaduct Project, Betsy has proven to be a dynamic leader who understands the enormous complexities of this project. I have every confidence that she is fully capable of successfully seeing it through from the first shovel in the ground through to completion.”

Former I-81 Project Director Mark Frechette said, “I have immensely enjoyed my career at DOT dating back to 1985 in both Central New York and the North Country and will fondly reflect on all the wonderful people, co-workers and friends I had the opportunity to work with over the years. As I turn over my responsibilities on the I-81 Viaduct Project to Betsy, I know I am leaving it in good hands. I have every confidence in her abilities to work with the community to kick off and complete this transformative project.”

Incoming I-81 Project Director Betsy Parmley said, “I feel very fortunate to have worked alongside Mark and the I-81 team for the past two years. I look forward to taking this project into the final design and construction phases and continuing to build on the accomplishments Mark and the team have led.”

The \$2.25 billion I-81 Viaduct Project will remove the existing elevated structure dividing the City of Syracuse and replace it with a new business loop and an integrated Community Grid that will disperse traffic along local north-south and east-west streets, and reconnect the neighborhoods severed by the interstate. The project would also upgrade a portion of Interstate 481, which would be re-designated as I-81; and construct the new “Business Loop 81” along Almond Street to improve connections to downtown and other business districts.

On January 12, the Office of the State Comptroller approved an award of \$296.4 million to Salt City Constructors, LLC, for the first construction contract on the I-81 Viaduct Project. Salt City Constructors, LLC is a combined entity of three contractors: Lancaster Development and Tully Construction Co., LLC, doing business as L&T Construction; D.A. Collins Construction Co., Inc. and Cold Spring Construction Co., Inc. The initial contract focuses on reconstructing the existing I-81/I-481 northern interchange into Business Loop 81 and I-81; and expanding portions of former I-481 from two to three lanes to the Kirkville Road interchange.

For more information about the I-81 Viaduct Project, please visit: <https://webapps.dot.ny.gov/i-81-viaduct-project>



###