

The bigness of road & bridge construction

by Sean Kilcarr
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With all the wrangling on Capitol Hill these days regarding how to fund surface transportation infrastructure projects, we tend to forget the sheer size and scope of such undertakings – and thus why they cost so much money.

Take the \$6.4 billion San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, for example: a bridge that replaced a span originally built back in 1936 that required five years or more than 42,000 hours of work.

A firm called [EarthCam](#) captured the entire construction project on film, so you can watch 60 months of work take place in less than four minutes:

Below is a clip of the Barton Corner Bridge project completed in 16 days this past August in Rhode Island: a replacement span that carries four lanes of I-95 plus two auxiliary lanes at a busy interchange with Route 2 on the Warwick/West Warwick line.

Using accelerated bridge construction technique enabled the contractor to build two halves of the bridge on land adjacent to the overpass before swinging them into place.

The firm said that allowed them to build the bridge much faster compared with conventional construction methods, which would have taken twice the time without affecting Interstate traffic prior to installation.

Here's a project completed this past June in Connecticut that also used accelerated bridge construction or "ABC" techniques: a \$6 million replacement for the I-84 bridge span over Marion Avenue near the city of Southington.

"This project not only demonstrates the unprecedented investments we are making to improve and modernize our transportation infrastructure but also the steps we are taking to ensure these kinds of projects are completed ahead of schedule and with as little interruption as possible to area residents and travelers," noted Governor Dannel Malloy in a statement.

"By employing ABC principles, CTDOT took a creative approach to virtually eliminate what would have been many months or even years of traffic disruptions and congestion on I-84 and the local roads surrounding the project," he added – wrapping up the project almost a month early.

Something to keep in mind as the debate over surface transportation funding continues.

