



Leadership and Chess: A Kind of Genius

By Otis White

Editor's note: We first published this article in 2015. It is still one of our favorites, well worth sharing again with all of our readers.

What the best public-sector leaders do doesn't sound very exciting. It helps to be great at chess.

Twenty-five years ago, as I was growing interested in how cities produce leaders and leaders shape cities, I heard a state business association president define leadership. A leader, he said, "is someone who helps people get where they want to go."

He was speaking to a community leadership class, and I could sense the audience deflate. That's it? Help people go somewhere? Like a bus driver? What about organizing constituencies, offering a vision, and persuading the public? What about standing up for people—or standing up to the powerful? What about holding office?

And, yet, I had to admit he was on to something. Organization and persuasion are skills. Visions can be supplied by others. Standing up to the

powerful and holding office are roles. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that helping people get where they want to go (and, one hopes, need to go) isn't a bad definition of what leaders do. It's just . . . incomplete.

So allow me to complete the definition. A leader is someone who helps people get where they want to go . . . by seeing the opportunity for getting there.

Seeing the opportunity—the narrow, sometimes temporary passage through which change can happen—is the genius of leadership. And herding people through that passage is the practice of leadership. What the genius and the practice require is a sense of how things fit together, a tactical vision, a willingness to learn from experience, and a saintly patience with people—but a patience that's bounded by the resolve to do something meaningful.

If this sounds abstract, trust me; there are examples all around you. Here in Atlanta, I've seen these traits in people who nurtured projects great and small, from the creation of the BeltLine, a circle of parks and trails that's transforming entire



neighborhoods, to the building of a roundabout that fixed an impossible intersection at the gates of Emory University and breathed life into a small retail district. In both cases, the leader was someone who recognized the value of these projects, sized up

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H Street Bridge NE Replacement Project, DC
District DOT Contract
Bid Date: March 31, 2025

Description of project:
H Street Bridge NE (Hopscotch Bridge), constructed in 1977, is located immediately north of Union Station, and links North Capitol Street to 3rd Street NE. The bridge spans 1,442 feet over 1st Street, NE, the Metro red line tracks, Amtrak tracks and platforms, and 2nd Street, NE. The purpose of the project is to replace the bridge to match its current configuration and operations for pedestrian, vehicle, bus and transit while not precluding future adjacent projects. The replacement of the bridge is needed to address deficiencies identified in the 2018 Bridge Inspection Report.

Many bidding opportunities are available: asphalt paving, bearings furnish and install, bridge deck overlay/grinding and grooving, condition survey, concrete barrier walls, curb and gutter/sidewalk/flatwork, deep foundations, demolition, earthwork, electrical/ITS/lighting/catenary, erosion and sediment control, equipment hauling, expansion joint furnish and install, hazmat mitigation services, permanent fencing, site security/temporary fencing, formwork, geoinstrumentation, granite works, maintenance of traffic, material testing, miscellaneous metals, modular joints furnish and install, noise and vibration monitoring, pavement markings, pest control, rebar furnish and install, roll off dumpsters, sawcutting, sheeting and shoring (sheet piles, tie-backs, underpinning, bracing), signing, site furnishings, storm drainage furnish and install, storm drainage pipe cleaning, structural steel furnish and erection, survey, sweeping, temporary barriers, temporary toilets, traffic control, traffic signals, trucking/hauling, utility relocation, welding, testing and inspection, and more!

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Outreach Coordinator: Aislinn.Speranza@skanska.com • EOE/Vet/Disabled

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IS CURRENTLY SOLICITING COST PROPOSALS FROM QUALIFIED AND CERTIFIED M/WBE AND SDVOB SUBCONTRACTORS, VENDORS, SERVICE PROVIDERS

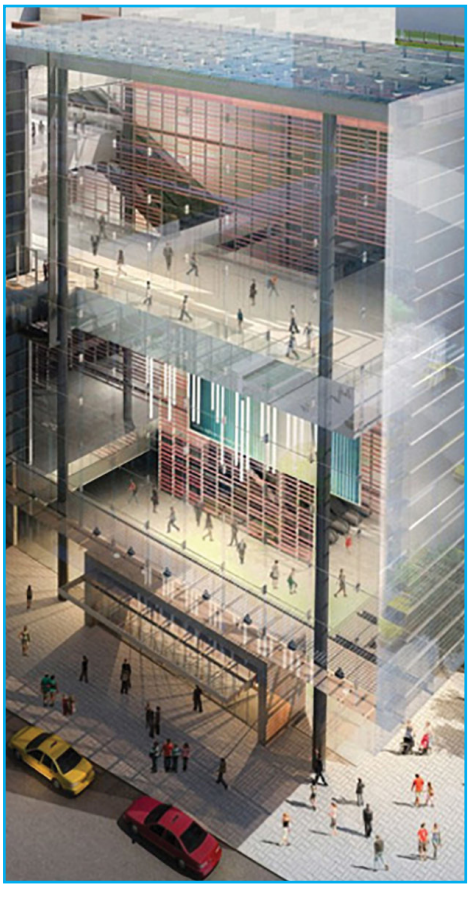
Design-Build Services for the Main Cable Dehumidification at the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in the Borough of New York City
MTA Construction and Development Contract No. VN-8Q
Bid Date: April 18, 2025

Description of work:

1. Installation of a main cable dehumidification system on the four cables of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge;
2. Replacement of the cable band bolts throughout all four main cables;
3. Internal main cable inspection of 12 panels;
4. Internal inspection of four additional main cable panels as directed by the PCEO;
5. Replacement of the messenger cables on the main cables;
6. Replacement of the aerial obstruction lights and supports on the main cables;
7. Installation and removal of temporary main cable access platforms necessary to perform the work;
8. Provide maintenance and protection of traffic throughout the project;
9. Installation of an acoustic monitoring system on all four cables;
10. Replacement and painting of all hand ropes and stanchions on all four cables;
11. Maintenance and monitoring of the main cable dehumidification system for five (5) years after commissioning and system acceptance; and
12. Maintenance and monitoring of the acoustic monitoring system for 5 years after commissioning and system acceptance.

Goals: 15% MBE, 15% WBE, 6% SDVOB

ALL QUOTATIONS ARE DUE BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS Friday, April 11, 2025.
Proposal bid date April 18, 2025. For further information concerning subcontracting and/or purchasing opportunities, and to register as a subcontractor or vendor, please respond to solicitations@tutorperini.com or contact Arlene McBayne at (914) 739-1908. Come and join our team!



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IS SOLICITING COST PROPOSALS FROM NEW YORK STATE DBE SUBCONTRACTORS AND VENDORS

Design-Build Services for LIRR West Side Yard Flood Mitigation Measures
MTA Construction and Development Contract No. 6401
Bid Date: June 27, 2025

Description of project:
Design, furnish, construct, and install concrete perimeter flood walls, seepage cut-off barriers below the concrete flood walls, flood gates, deployable flood barriers, sump pumps, a tide gate chamber, drainage system improvements, workable aisles and a diesel generator, an automatic transfer switch, ancillary electrical equipment, and required communications.

This project will develop flood protection solutions for the West Side Yard in order to prevent and mitigate flooding of the LIRR Tunnels. The flood protection along the WSY perimeter will be accomplished via a combination of permanent flood walls and deployable flood barriers.

Many bidding opportunities are available: deep foundations, minipiles, jetgrout, sheeting, rebar installation, concrete supply, site work, electrical work, painting, paving, curb and sidewalk, site utilities.

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Diversity and Outreach Coordinator: Aislinn.Speranza@skanska.com • EOE/M/F/Vet/Disabled

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Illinois District Office for a virtual workshop providing an overview of the 8(a) Business Development program, eligibility requirements, and program benefits. Also learn how to increase your potential for federal contract opportunities through System for Award Management (SAM) registration, including information that you need for the registration process. SBA presenters will offer additional tips, address FAQs, give directions on where to get further assistance, and answer your other questions. To register for this free webinar, <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/ae4bd15d-ec43-4da3-a0a9-854abf063970@3c89fd8a-7f68-4667-aa15-41cbf2208961>

Selling to the Federal Government Webinar
Thursday, April 24, 2025, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: George Tapia, 610-382-3086, george.tapia@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required

Did you know that the federal government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world? Interested in learning how your business can market your services or goods to the federal government? Register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/how-to-sell-to-the-federal-government-tickets-1013616984687> SBA helps to ensure small businesses get fair opportunities to share federal government prime contracts. Topics will include: How to Register, Small Business Certifications, Finding Opportunities, Marketing Your Firm, Federal Supply Schedules, Getting Aid, Tips to Prepare Your Offer, How to Seek Additional Assistance. All training sessions are held via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

8(a) Orientation and SAM Registration Webinar
Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 10:30 am–12:00 pm
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: SBA Illinois District Office, 312-353-4528, illinois.do@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required

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