



PUBLIC MEETING

December 7, 2011

at

**Amesbury Middle School
Performance Center
220 Main Street**

AMESBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

7:00 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

**WHITTIER BRIDGE/I-95 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
I-95 FROM EXIT 57 TO EXIT 60
Project No. 601096**

**IN THE CITIES OF AMESBURY AND NEWBURYPORT AND
THE TOWN OF SALISBURY**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

**FRANK DEPAOLA, P.E.
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**THOMAS F. BRODERICK, P.E.
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION**

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC MEETING

Project File No. 601096

A Public Meeting will be held by MassDOT to present the Environmental Assessment/Draft Environmental Impact Report and seek public comments on the proposed Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project in Amesbury, Newburyport and Salisbury, MA.

WHERE: Amesbury Middle School, Performance Center
220 Main Street
Amesbury, MA 01913

WHEN: Wednesday, December 7, 2011 @ 7:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting is to seek public comment on the Environmental Assessment/Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project involves as its centerpiece the replacement of the John Greenleaf Whittier Bridge over the Merrimack River. It also includes the replacement or reconstruction of four bridges along I-95 in Newburyport and Amesbury and widening I-95 between Exit 57 in Newburyport and Exit 60 in Salisbury. When completed, there will be four travel lanes, a shoulder adjacent to the high speed lane and a breakdown lane in each direction. The Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project was recently selected by the Obama Administration for expedited permitting and environmental review. It is one of the largest projects to be undertaken by MassDOT under the Commonwealth's \$3 billion Accelerated Bridge Program. The project includes the Whittier Trail: the first shared-use path to be constructed along a Massachusetts interstate.

Plans will be on display one-half hour before the meeting begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project. A project handout will be made available on the MassDOT project website – www.mass.gov/massdot/whittierbridge.

Comments on the Environmental Assessment/Draft Environmental Impact Report must be submitted by December 23, 2011. Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the Public Meeting regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Pamela S. Stephenson, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, 55 Broadway, 10th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02142, Attention: Damaris Santiago; and to Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Secretary, Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office, 100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor, Boston, MA 02114, Attention: Purvi Patel; with a copy to Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Acting Chief Engineer, MassDOT Highway Division, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: James Cerbone, Project File No. 601096. Such submissions will also be accepted at the meeting.

The community has declared that this facility is accessible to all in compliance with the ADA / Title II. However, persons in need of ADA / Title II accommodations should contact John Lozada by phone at (617) 973-7171 or email to MASSDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us. Requests must be made at least 10 days prior to the date of the public hearing.

In case of inclement weather, hearing cancellation announcements will be posted on the internet at <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Highway/>

FRANK DEPAOLA, P.E.
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

THOMAS F. BRODERICK, P.E.
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER

Boston, Massachusetts



Deval L. Patrick, Governor
Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor
Richard A. Davey, Secretary & CEO
Frank DePaola, Administrator



Dear Concerned Citizen:

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is committed to building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure that is both safe and efficient for all who use our roadways, bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, while maintaining the integrity of the environment.

As part of the design process for this project, we are conducting this public hearing to explain the proposed improvements, listen to your comments and answer any questions you may have. At the conclusion of the hearing, MassDOT will review all of your comments and, where feasible, incorporate them into the design of the project.

We recognize that road and bridge construction can create inconveniences for the public. MassDOT places a great deal of emphasis on minimizing the temporary disruptive effects of construction.

MassDOT encourages input from local communities and values your opinions. Please be assured that we will undertake no project without addressing the concerns of the community.

Sincerely,

Frank DePaola
Administrator, Highway Division

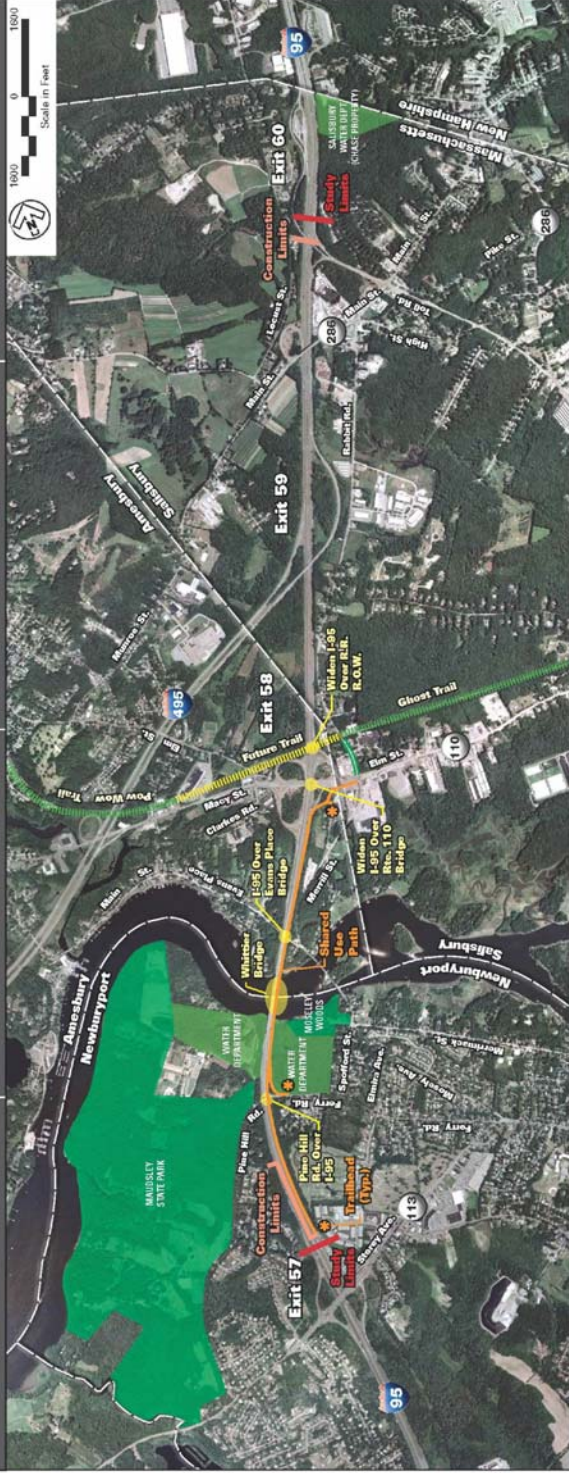


East Elevation

Park and Ride

Old Merrill Road

Center Overlook



Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project • Newburyport/Amesbury/Salisbury





The Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project is one of the largest projects undertaken by MassDOT under the Commonwealth's \$3 billion Accelerated Bridge Program. The project includes the Whittier Trail: the first shared-use path to be constructed along a Massachusetts interstate. The project is one of six priority transportation projects recently selected by the Obama Administration for expedited permitting and environmental review.

Location: The project area extends four miles along the I-95 corridor from Exit 57 (Route 113/Storey Avenue) in Newburyport to Exit 60 (State Route 286/Main Street overpass and the toll road overpass) in Salisbury and includes the Whittier Bridge, which carries I-95 traffic over the Merrimack River. The Whittier Bridge / I-95 Improvement Project will directly affect the towns of Newburyport, Amesbury and Salisbury.

Role: The Whittier Bridge is a major component of the regional transportation infrastructure carrying an average of 75,000 vehicles per day. The I-95 corridor, the major north-south interstate highway on the eastern seaboard of the United States, serves as an important commuter route to Boston from the North Shore area of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and southern Maine.

History and Purpose: The Whittier Bridge was originally designed to carry only two lanes of traffic in each direction with full breakdown lanes. In the 1960s, it was reconfigured to three lanes in each direction without shoulders. After extensive analysis, MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) determined that the bridge cannot be rehabilitated due to its structural deficiencies and functional obsolescence. The purpose of the project is to replace the existing six-lane John Greenleaf Whittier Memorial Bridge over the Merrimack River to remedy these issues, to provide sufficient capacity for current and projected traffic volumes, improve safety and meet current FHWA Interstate Highway Standards.

Process: MassDOT Highway Division has selected a consultant team led by Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB). The project team conducted a bridge type study and MassDOT and FHWA adopted the recommended network tied arch bridge type. The PB team will provide 25% design plans and a 25% design-build procurement package for the project.

The existing bridge over the Merrimack River will be replaced with a new bridge on a parallel alignment within the existing right-of-way. The structure will have four travel lanes, a high-speed shoulder and a breakdown lane in each direction. The project also includes the replacement or reconstruction of four bridges along I-95 in Amesbury and Newburyport and construction of a shared-use path on the easterly, northbound side. The project is expected to cost \$285 million.

Replacement of the Whittier Bridge is a major component in Governor Patrick's Accelerated Bridge Program. MassDOT Highway Division is committed to completing this project in the shortest amount of time possible with the least amount of disruption to local communities while being environmentally responsible. To speed replacement of the Whittier Bridge and reduce impacts, MassDOT Highway Division is planning to use design/build methods and will investigate innovative construction techniques. The contractor will be required to maintain three lanes of travel in each direction during construction.

Key Dates:

- FHWA Decision on Environmental Assessment for NEPA: January 20, 2012
- Final Environmental Impact Report filed with MEPA: February 28, 2012
- Design Public Hearing: Spring 2012
- Design/Build Procurement Package: April 2012
- Anticipated Construction Start: Spring 2013
- Construction Complete: 2016

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, HIGHWAY DIVISION
WHITTIER BRIDGE/I-95 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
NEWBURYPORT, AMESBURY, SALISBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

The purpose of this meeting is to seek public comment on the Environmental Assessment/Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Whittier Bridge/I-95 Improvement Project. The EA/DEIR document is available on the project website at www.mass.gov/massdot/whittierbridge and print copies and/or DVDs may be obtained by contacting James Cerbone at 617-973-7529 or James.Cerbone@state.ma.us.

Comments on this document are due by December 23, 2011 and should be sent to:

Pamela S. Stephenson, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
55 Broadway, 10th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142
Attention: Damaris Santiago
Or by email: dsantiago@dot.gov

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Secretary
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
Attention: Purvi Patel

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Acting Chief Engineer
MassDOT Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention: James Cerbone
Or by email: James.Cerbone@state.ma.us