

<i>For Office Use Only</i> <i>Executive Office of Environmental Affairs</i>
EOEA No.: <i>14427</i>
MEPA Analyst: <i>Arvi Patel</i>
Phone: 617-626- <i>1029</i>

ENF Environmental Notification Form

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: Whittier Bridge I-95 Improvement Project, Newburyport/Amesbury/Salisbury		
Street: Interstate Route 95		
Municipality: Newburyport, Amesbury, Salisbury	Watershed: Merrimack River	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Start: 4743131 N, 343375 E End: 4748996 N, 346096 E	Latitude: Start: 42°49'29" N End: 42°52'41" W Longitude: Start: 70°54'41" N End: 70°53'4" W	
Estimated commencement date: 2011	Estimated completion date: 2014	
Approximate cost: \$285 million	Status of project design: 5%	%complete
Proponent: Massachusetts Highway Department		
Street: 10 Park Plaza		
Municipality: Boston	State: MA	Zip Code: 02116
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this ENF May Be Obtained: John Fallon, Supervisor of Major Projects		
Firm/Agency: MassHighway	Street: 10 Park Plaza – Room 4260	
Municipality: Boston	State: MA	Zip Code: 02116
Phone: (617) 973-7408	Fax:	E-mail: john.fallon@state.ma.us

- Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)?
 Yes No
- Has this project been filed with MEPA before?
 Yes (EOEA No. _____) No
- Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before?
 Yes (EOEA No. _____) No
- Is this an Expanded ENF (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) requesting:
- a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8)) Yes No
 - a Special Review Procedure? (see 301 CMR 11.09) Yes No
 - a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11) Yes No
 - a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11) Yes No

Identify any financial assistance or land transfer from an agency of the Commonwealth, including the agency name and the amount of funding or land area (in acres): None

Are you requesting coordinated review with any other federal, state, regional, or local agency?
 Yes (Specify NEPA review with Federal Highway Administration) No

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals: Section 404 - US Army Corps of Engineers; Section 9 Bridge - US Coast Guard; NPDES Construction Storm Water and Dewatering General Permits-EPA; Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement - Mass Historical Commission ; Orders of Resource Area Delineations and Orders of Conditions from Newburyport, Amesbury, Salisbury Conservation Commissions

Which ENF or EIR review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03):

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land | <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Species | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetlands, Waterways, & Tidelands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Air | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid & Hazardous Waste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACEC | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical & Archaeological Resources |

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order of Conditions
Total site acreage (Highway right-of-way)	270	0	270	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Superseding Order of Conditions
New acres of land altered	0	4 -70*	4-70	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chapter 91 License
Acres of impervious area	51	0 – 10.6*	51-62	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration ¹	0	0 – 7.8* Acres	0 – 7.8* Acres	<input type="checkbox"/> MHD or MDC Access Permit
Square feet of new other wetland alteration	0	Coastal Bank; Bank; Land Under Ocean; Salt Marsh; LSCSF** BLSF*** TBD	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Management Act Permit
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways	0	0	0	<input type="checkbox"/> New Source Approval
				<input type="checkbox"/> DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit
Gross square footage	N/A	N/A	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Permits (including Legislative Approvals) – Specify:
Number of housing units	N/A	N/A	N/A	Orders of Resource Area Delineation – Newburyport, Amesbury, Salisbury
Maximum height (in feet)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Vehicle trips per day	N/A	N/A	N/A	Wetlands Variance Order of Conditions
Parking spaces	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	N/A	N/A	N/A	
GPD water withdrawal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	N/A	N/A	N/A	

* Area of impact represents the range of potential impact (see attachment 2, including the No Build Alternative.

** LSCSF – Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage

*** BLSF – Bordering Land Subject to Flooding

¹ Wetland area impacts are calculated based on MassGIS mapping for BVW, other resource area impacts cannot be estimated at this time. Wetlands are being delineated in the field and Abbreviated Notices of Resource Area Delineation (ANRADs) will be filed to confirm the wetland limits.

CONSERVATION LAND: Will the project involve the conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?

Yes (Specify _____) No

Will it involve the release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction?

Yes (Specify _____) No

RARE SPECIES: Does the project site include Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities?

Yes (Specify _____) No

The project spans the Merrimack River which is designated as both Estimated Habitat of Rare Wetlands Wildlife (EH65) and Priority Habitat of Rare Species (PH1321), including the Shortnose Sturgeon and Bald Eagle.

HISTORICAL /ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Does the project site include any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

Yes (Specify see below _____) No

The John Greenleaf Whittier Memorial Bridge is included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The bridge also has been determined to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places as one of three bridges in Massachusetts on the Federal Highway Administration's "Final List of Nationally and Exceptionally Significant Features of the Federal Interstate Highway System," which was adopted by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and published in the Federal Register on December 19, 2006.

One property listed in the State Register of Historic Places is located immediately adjacent to the project area—Smith's Chain Bridge Filling Station No. 3 at 520 Main Street in Amesbury, which is the subject of a preservation restriction held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). In addition, the Salisbury Point Area (AME.C), which is located along Main Street in Amesbury immediately northwest of the project area, is included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth and has been determined by MHC to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. The Essex-Merrimac Bridge-Chain Bridge (AME.538), which crosses the Merrimac River approximately ¼ mile east of the Whittier Bridge, also is included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth and has been determined by MHC to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Lowell's Boat Shop, which is listed in the State Register of Historic Places and is a National Historic Landmark, is located approximately ½ mile west of the project area at 459 Main Street in Amesbury. Historic resources reconnaissance and intensive surveys will be conducted within the project area of potential effect to verify and evaluate other historic resources in the Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and to identify any potentially eligible resources that have not been previously recorded.

There are no State Register-listed archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity of the project area. There are no recorded archaeological sites within the direct project impact area, including the rights-of-way for the highway widening or bridge replacement/rehabilitation work areas. A review of the archaeological base maps at MHC revealed two recorded prehistoric archaeological sites along the Merrimac River within ½ mile of the project area: Site 19-ES-273 west of the project area and Site 19-ES-279 east of the project area. Additional archaeological studies may be warranted as the project design develops. CRU staff will evaluate project impacts to NR-eligible properties within the project's

Area of Potential Effect (APE), and will coordinate their review with MHC under the terms of the amended Section 106 Programmatic Agreement

If yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources?

Yes (Specify _____) No

The project proposes to replace the existing I-95 six-lane John Greenleaf Whittier Memorial Bridge over the Merrimack River. The Whittier Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (see above).

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN: Is the project in or adjacent to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern?

Yes (Specify _____) No

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project description should include (a) a description of the project site, (b) a description of both on-site and off-site alternatives and the impacts associated with each alternative, and (c) potential on-site and off-site mitigation measures for each alternative (You may attach one additional page, if necessary.)

The Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) is proposing to replace the existing I-95 six-lane John Greenleaf Whittier Memorial Bridge over the Merrimack River to remedy the structural deficiencies and functional obsolescence of the existing bridge. The purpose of the project is: to provide for an improved bridge crossing of the Merrimack River which meets current Interstate Highway design standards; to reduce congestion and improve the flow of traffic on I-95 through the project area; to improve safety by reducing the incidence of accidents and reducing peak hour traffic backups by providing for a consistent eight-lane cross-section through the project area; and to improve local and regional air quality by reducing congestion on I-95.

The Whittier Bridge was opened with four lanes of traffic in 1954 with the relocation of US Route 1. The existing bridge is in need of extensive repairs to remain in service and cannot be rehabilitated to accommodate an eight-lane cross section. The bridge does not meet current traffic volume requirements, is the location of an elevated number of accidents and fails to meet current FHWA Interstate Highway Standards. The project proposes to replace the existing bridge with a new structure(s) on a parallel alignment.

In addition, the project will improve I-95 in Newburyport, Amesbury and Salisbury by widening the highway from its current six-lane configuration to eight lanes, from immediately north of the I-95/Route 113 Interchange in Newburyport to just north of the I-495 entrance ramp to I-95 in Salisbury, a distance of approximately 4.25 miles. This widening will match the eight-lane configuration of the proposed bridge replacement and the existing I-95 eight-lane cross-section south and north of the project area.

The project is included in the Accelerated Bridge Program (ABP) currently being implemented by MassHighway.

Four to ten other bridges within the project corridor will be replaced, reconstructed or modified to accommodate eight lanes of traffic on I-95 and to meet current design standards as much as practicable. These bridges include:

- Ferry Road (Pine Hill Road) over I-95 in Newburyport: This bridge was constructed in 1976 and is not structurally deficient. Widening of I-95 may require reconstruction of the bridge to accommodate the wider I-95 roadway.
- I-95 over Evans Place in Amesbury: This bridge was constructed in 1954 and reconstructed in 1977. This bridge is also not structurally deficient, but must be reconstructed and widened to accommodate eight lanes of traffic on I-95.
- I-95 NB and SB over State Route 110 (Elm Street) in Amesbury: These bridges were constructed in 1967. Each bridge carries three lanes of traffic on I-95 over State Route 110 and each bridge must be rehabilitated and widened to accommodate the additional two lanes of traffic on I-95.
- Three railroad bridges just north of State Route 110 (Elm Street) in Amesbury: These bridges were constructed in 1967. Two of the bridges carry three lanes of traffic on I-95 over the railroad right of way and one carries Route 110 on ramp traffic to I-95 over the railroad right of way. The I-95 bridges will be widened to accommodate an additional lane of traffic on I-95. The on ramp bridge will be widened based on the mainline widening final alignment.
- Additional Overpass Bridges: Three additional overpass bridges at the northern terminus of the project will be improved under a bridge preservation program or modified or reconstructed based on the final lane I-95 widening alignment, and these include:
 - 1) Route I-495 North two lane ramp over I-95
 - 2) State Route 286 (Main Street) over I-95
 - 3) Toll Road over I-95

From 1967 to 1969, I-95 was widened to provide six lanes of traffic from Danvers over the Merrimack River north to I-495 in Salisbury, and eight lanes of traffic from I-495 north to the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border. The bridge traffic lanes were reconfigured to two 2 foot shoulders and three 12-foot travel lanes in each direction. The reconstructed I-95 was designed to handle the traffic loads of the newly completed I-495, as well as the then-proposed expansion of the New Hampshire Turnpike (I-95). From 1973 to 1977, I-95 was widened further to provide eight lanes of traffic from the Merrimack River south to US Route 1 in Danvers.

Project Area

The project area extends from Interchange 57 (State Route 113/Storey Avenue) in Newburyport to the south, north across the Merrimack River, through Interchange 58 (State Route 110/Elm Street), Interchange 59 (I-495) and on to Interchange 60 (State Route 286/Main Street overpass and the Toll Road overpass) to the north in Salisbury, south of the New Hampshire state line. The project limits are illustrated in Attachment 3, Figure 3-1.

Project Alternatives

MassHighway has initiated environmental and engineering investigations to determine the preferred bridge replacement and roadway widening alternatives for the project area. Several project alternatives are under consideration and will be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). These alternatives include those for the highway widening to the south of the river and the Merrimack River crossing; and for both the location and northern limit of the highway widening north of the river. The alternatives described below are compared in terms of land area requirements, potential wetland impacts, and traffic and engineering factors in Attachment 2. Figures illustrating the alternatives are also included in Attachment 2.

Highway Widening South of the River and Bridge Crossing Alternatives: Options for the highway

widening south of the river and the river crossing include the following alternatives. Note that all of these options include a widening of I-95 to an eight-lane cross-section from the new bridge crossing to the southern project limits, the only difference is the alignment of the highway on the immediate approach to the bridge:

Progressive Staging Option – This option would include the progressive construction of a new bridge (from west to east) in three phases:

- Phase I, a new three-lane southbound (SB) bridge would be constructed just west of the existing structure, and, once completed; the SB traffic would be transferred to the new structure in an interim lane configuration.
- Phase II, would include the strengthening and extensive modifications to the NB half of the existing bridge to prepare it for the incremental load transfer and demolition of the SB half of the existing bridge, while the NB half remains in service. The phase I section of the new bridge would then be widened to accommodate three (NB) lanes of traffic within the SB portion of the old bridge footprint. NB traffic would then be relocated to the new structure in an interim lane configuration.
- Phase III would include demolition of the NB half of the existing bridge and completion of bridge construction to its full width and traffic would be placed in its final lane configuration.

East Side Option – This option would involve the construction of a new bridge on the east side of the existing structure with six lanes, enabling both NB and SB traffic to be relocated to the new bridge upon completion. The old bridge structure would then be demolished, and a new four-lane bridge for SB traffic would be constructed.

West Side Option – Similar to the alternative above, this option would involve the construction of a new SB bridge on the west side of the existing structure with six lanes, enabling all traffic to be relocated to the new bridge upon completion. Once the old bridge structure is removed, the NB Bridge can be constructed.

East and West Single Phase Option – This option would involve construction of new NB and SB four-lane bridge structures on each side of the existing bridge. Once all traffic is diverted to the new bridges, demolition of the existing Whittier Bridge would occur.

Highway Widening North of the River: Options for the highway widening north of the river include the following. These alternatives are largely independent of the bridge crossing alternative; any individual alternative could be implemented with any of the bridge crossing alternatives.

- Widening of the NB & SB roadways to the inside, in the existing median;
- Widening of the NB & SB roadways to the outside of the existing alignment;
- Inside NB lane and outside SB lane; and
- Outside NB lane and inside SB lane.

Northern limits of work for the widening being evaluated include:

- Continue widening to Route 286 interchange; and
- Terminate widening prior to I-495 interchange ramps.

Full Project Alternatives

No Build Option – In compliance with MEPA requirements, the No Build alternative will be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report. This option would involve limited maintenance rather than replacement or rehabilitation of the Whittier Bridge with no accommodation for additional travel lanes or breakdown shoulders. The existing Whittier Bridge would not be improved to meet Interstate Highway Design standards, nor would I-95 be widened to an eight-lane cross-section in the project area. The No Build Alternative would not address the existing safety deficiencies in the project corridor, and would not reduce existing peak hour congestion on I-95. No other improvements would be made in the project area.

Rehabilitation Option – The Rehabilitation Option will be analyzed in compliance with Section 106 historic preservation requirements and includes the implementation of repairs and upgrades to the Whittier Bridge intended to extend the service life of the structure. These repairs and improvements would include removing lead paint and repainting the bridge, replacing the roadway deck and making seismic upgrades to the structure. The bridge would not be improved to current Interstate Highway design standards. This option would not include any widening of the I-95 corridor to an eight-lane cross-section in the project area and would not address existing safety deficiencies or relieve peak hour congestion in the project corridor.

Environmental Concerns

It is anticipated that technically sound alternatives for the proposed improvements can be developed that will allow the proposed improvements to be constructed entirely within the existing I-95 right-of-way and that no permanent property takings will be necessary to accommodate the construction of a new bridge or highway widening. Depending on the alternative selected, temporary construction period takings may be required in order to construct the project, these will be identified during the design process.

Impacts to wetland resources may result from highway widening north of the Merrimack River, and from bridge construction in and adjacent to the Merrimack River, including salt marsh along the banks of the river. Depending on the alternative selected as the Preferred Alternative, the project may require a Variance from the Wetlands Regulations. Potential wetland impacts are presented as a range of impacts to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands, based on MassGIS mapping. Wetlands are being delineated in the field and Abbreviated Notices of Resource Area Delineations will be filed with the Newburyport, Amesbury and Salisbury Conservation Commissions to determine the extent of jurisdictional wetlands. Other jurisdictional wetland resources in the project area include Salt Marsh, Land Subject to Flooding and Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage, Riverfront Area, Bank and Coastal Bank, Land Under Water, and Land Underlying an Anadromous Fish Run. Potential wetland impacts of each alternative are compared in Attachment 2.

Collection and treatment of storm water runoff from the project will meet the DEP Storm Water Management regulations at 310 CMR 10.05(k) and the DEP Storm Water Management Policy, using appropriate Best Management Practices included in MassHighway's Storm Water Handbook. Infiltration of storm water runoff will be maximized as much as practicable.

The I-95 alignment in Newburyport passes across land controlled by the Newburyport Water Department and within the Zone II of a municipal water supply well. Currently, MassHighway institutes a reduced

salting program on this portion of I-95 to minimize the potential of impacting the water supply. This policy will be continued after the highway widening is completed. I-95 also runs through the Zone II of a Town of Salisbury municipal water supply well north of I-495.

As previously noted, the John Greenleaf Whittier Memorial Bridge is included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The bridge also has been determined to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places as one of three bridges in Massachusetts on the Federal Highway Administration's "Final List of Nationally and Exceptionally Significant Features of the Federal Interstate Highway System" (along with the I-93 Leonard P. Zakim – Bunker Hill Bridge between Boston and Cambridge and the I-95 Central Avenue Bridge in Needham). MassHighway will complete a full Section 106 consultation and evaluation of alternatives for the bridge with the Massachusetts Historic Commission and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

The Shortnose Sturgeon, listed as endangered by both the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, is known to exist in the Merrimack River. Protected habitat for the Bald Eagle, listed as endangered by the NHESP, is also located along the Merrimack River. MassHighway will evaluate measures to avoid potential impacts to the sturgeon resulting from construction of a new bridge crossing. MassHighway will consult with the NHESP to identify mitigation measures to avoid any potential impacts to bald eagle habitat.

Potential navigational impacts to the existing Merrimack River federal navigation channel will be assessed and coordinated closely with the US Coast Guard through the Section 9 Bridge Permit program and with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection through the Chapter 91 licensing process.

Demolition of the Whittier Bridge will result in the generation of demolition debris which will be properly disposed of at licensed disposal or recycling facilities. Lead paint will be removed from the bridge structure prior to demolition in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Public Outreach

MassHighway has also initiated a public outreach program to solicit public involvement and comment on the proposed highway improvement and bridge replacement project. MassHighway is not aware of any substantial public controversy regarding the project. There is considerable public knowledge of the need to address the deteriorated condition of the existing Whittier Bridge.

Meetings with municipal officials in Newburyport, Amesbury and Salisbury have been held to date:

1. Amesbury – March 11, 2009. Attendees included: Mayor Thatcher Kezer; Kendra Amaral; Chief of Staff; and Robert Desmarais, DPW.
2. Newburyport – March 19, 2009. Attendees included: Mayor John Moak; City Councillors Donna Holaday, Gregory Earls, James Shanley and Brian Derrivan; Brendan O'Regan, Department of Public Services; Geordie Vining, Sr. PM, Office of Planning and Development; Thomas Howard, Police Department; Mark Kavanaugh, IT Director; Julia Godtfredsen; Sean Sullivan, Director of the Office of Planning and Development.
3. Salisbury – April 1, 2009. Attendees included: Neil Harrington, Town Manager; and Selectmen Don Beaulieu, Ed Hunt and Henry Richenburg.