



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Deval L. Patrick
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian A. Bowles
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

May 9, 2008

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME: I-495/I-290/Route 85 Interchange Transportation
Improvements Project
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Hudson, Marlborough
PROJECT WATERSHED: Concord
EOEA NUMBER: 14210
PROJECT PROPONENT: Massachusetts Highway Department
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: March 26, 2008

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) is proposing to reconfigure the existing I-290/I-495/Route 85 Connector Road Interchange (Interchange 25) to relieve and improve traffic congestion and safety in all directions. The project aims to alleviate existing interchange congestion attributed to ongoing commercial and residential growth and traffic volumes in the Marlborough and Hudson project area, and safety issues attributed to insufficient interchange ramp design. The project is consistent with the long-term improvement recommendations of the *Route 85 Connector Transportation Study (November 2001)*, prepared by MassHighway. According to MassHighway the project will also relieve pressure on nearby interchanges and may result in increased road capacity. The project site is located adjacent to the Assabet River.

As described in the ENF, Alternative 1 is the proponent's preferred project alternative and consists of the following major construction elements:

- Construction of a new two-lane I-290E to I-495N elevated ramp
- Construction of a new two-lane I-495N to I-290W elevated ramp
- Construction of a new I-290E to I-495S at-grade ramp
- Construction of a new I-495S to I-290W at-grade ramp
- Construction of a new Route 85 Connector to I-495N at-grade ramp
- Construction of a new two-lane bridge expansion over the Assabet River Bridge
- Removal of I-290 E to I-495 N ramp
- Removal of I-495 N to I-290 W loop ramp
- Removal of I-495 S to I-290 W ramp
- Removal of I-290 E to I-495 S ramp
- Removal of end I-290 W to I-495 S ramp

The project is undergoing review pursuant to Section 11.03(6)(b)(1)(b), Section 11.03(6)(b)(2)(a), and Section 11.03(6)(b)(1)(a) of the MEPA Regulations because it requires the widening of an existing roadway by four or more feet for one-half or more miles; alters terrain ten or more feet from the existing roadway for one-half or more miles; and will result in the construction of a new roadway one-quarter or more miles in length. The project will require numerous Federal, State and local permits including:

- a CE or Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA);
- a Section 404 United States Army Corps of Engineers (U.S. ACOE) Permit;
- a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA); and
- an Order of Conditions from the Hudson and Marlborough Conservation Commissions, or if the Order(s) is appealed, a Superseding Order of Conditions from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP).
- The project may also require a Section 401 Water Quality Certificate from MassDEP.

Because the project proponent is a state agency and the project involves state funding, MEPA jurisdiction is broad and extends to all aspects of the project that may cause significant damage to the environment.

Transportation

The project is presented in the ENF as a transportation improvement project, designed to expand Interchange 25 into a full-access interchange capable of conveying traffic from both I-495

northbound or southbound to both I-290 westbound or the Route 85 Connector eastbound.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

I ask that MassHighway identify a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan that incorporates measures designed to help increase regional mobility and reduce vehicle trip congestion in the project area. Such measures may include:

- Establish a park & ride lot located within the Interchange 25 project area;
- On-line carpooling and vanpooling sign-up program;
- Expanded outreach and incentives for carpooling and vanpooling;
- Expanded marketing of transit;
- Improved static and electronic transit signage; and,
- Continued participation with the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, the City of Marlborough, the Town of Hudson, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), TransitWorks, MBTA, and MassRIDES, to increase transit opportunities within the project area.

All project contractors should be required to participate in the proposed TDM plan. The TDM plan should describe any construction and post-construction monitoring necessary to ensure the success of the proposed transit improvements and TDM program. A copy of the TDM plan should be forwarded to the MEPA Office for the project file.

Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

MassHighway should work with local officials from Hudson and Marlborough to identify bus connections and potential shuttle bus services from activity nodes and residential areas through the project area. MassHighway should identify existing and proposed public transit routes and shuttle bus service in the project area that currently connect to or could be made to also connect to existing public transportation nodes or a future park & ride lot that may be located within the Interchange 25 project site.

Wetlands

Based upon a five percent design stage, the proponent has estimated that project will impact approximately 7,000 sf of Bordering Land Subject Flooding (BLSF) and less than 5,000 square feet (sf) of bordering vegetated wetlands (BVW). MassHighway must demonstrate that the general performance standards (as defined at 310 CMR 10.04) for jurisdictional resource areas (as defined at 310 CMR 10.04) will be met as part of its Notice of Intent filing with the Marlborough and Hudson Conservation Commissions. MassHighway should also demonstrate that any proposed compensatory flood storage will be adequate. Furthermore, the project should be designed in compliance with MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy. As indicated in MassDEP's comment letter, MassHighway must delineate all wetland resources areas located within the project site and identify the full extent of project-related impacts and proposed mitigation/replication to wetland resource areas.

Stormwater

According to MassHighway, the stormwater management system for the proposed Interchange 25 improvements will be designed to meet MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy standards (as revised in January 2008) and will incorporate the use of best management practices (BMPs) including grass channels, infiltration basins and sediment forebays, that will result in an overall improvement in stormwater treatment for I-290, I-495 and the Route 85 Connector drainage within the project limits. As described in the ENF, portions of the project site and proposed construction activities are located in close proximity to an Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA) for the Town of Hudson's Rimkus Well public drinking water supply. In their comments, MassDEP has requested that MassHighway's stormwater management plan locate stormwater sediment catch basins equipped with oil/water separators within the IWPA portions of the project site to prevent construction-related and post construction contamination of drinking water supply wells. MassHighway should consult with MassDEP during final project design to ensure for the protection of the Town of Hudson's Rimkus Well public drinking water supply.

Historic

The project area includes the Robbin Hill Cemetery which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. MassHighway should review and evaluate the project in accordance with the terms of the Programmatic Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration, MassHighway and MHC. MassHighway will need to consult with MHC to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse impacts to significant historic or archaeological resources that may be located within the project area.

Noise

As described in the ENF submittal, using Federal noise standards for transportation projects, MassHighway has identified a number of sensitive noise receptors in the project area located in residential areas mainly along Berlin Road and Wheeler Hill Boulevard in Marlborough. The results of MassHighway's noise analysis under the 2020 Build Conditions indicate that the proposed I-495/I-290/Route 85 Interchange Transportation Improvements Project would result in minor reductions in sound levels at most of the receptor locations. According to MassHighway, two receptor locations have been identified that currently experience noise levels exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria. MassHighway conducted a noise barrier mitigation evaluation to reduce sound levels for these two locations and determined that a noise barrier would not provide the minimum noise reduction to satisfy MassHighway's and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) noise abatement criteria and guidelines.

According to the proponent, the project is at the five percent design stage and many design considerations will continue to undergo evaluation and revision (including environmental impacts, layout, intersection capacity, and signal placement) as the design progresses. I expect that MassHighway will address relevant comments throughout the subsequent design process. MassHighway should continue to consider design alternatives to avoid, minimize and mitigate direct and indirect environmental impacts to sensitive receptors such as the Assabet River, BVW, active public water supplies, historic or archaeological resources, and Article 97 lands.

Based on a review of the information provided by the MassHighway and after consultation with the relevant public agencies, I find that the potential impacts of this project do not warrant further MEPA review.

May 9, 2008
Date



Ian A. Bowles, Secretary

Comments Received:

03/28/2008	Massachusetts Historical Commission
04/14/2008	Marlborough 2010
04/14/2008	Southwest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP)
04/15/2008	495/MetroWest Corridor
04/16/2008	Metro West Growth Management Committee
04/16/2008	Executive Office of Transportation – Massachusetts Highway Department
04/17/2008	City of Marlborough, Department of Public Works
04/22/2008	Metropolitan area Planning Council (MAPC)
04/22/2008	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection – CERO
04/22/2008	Executive Office of Transportation – Massachusetts Highway Department

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