



**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts**
Executive Office of Environmental
Affairs ■ MEPA Office

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Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

EOEA No.: 12871
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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: I-95/I-93/University Avenue and Dedham Street Interchanges Project		
Street: I-95/I-93/University Avenue and Dedham Street Interchanges		
Municipality: Canton/Dedham/Westwood	Watershed: Boston Harbor	
Universal Tranverse Mercator Coordinates: 32 3343.22E 4675030.48N	Latitude: 42.1227° N	Longitude: 71.0824° W
Estimated commencement date: Spring 2007	Estimated completion date: Summer 2009	
Approximate cost: \$ 50 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: Grace Arthur		
Firm/Agency: MassHighway	Street: 10 Park Plaza - Room 4260	
Municipality: Boston	State: MA	Zip Code: 02116
Phone: (617) 973-8251	Fax: (617) 973-8879	E-mail: Grace.Arthur@mhd.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 301CMR 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): _____

MassHighway construction funding

Are you requesting coordinated review with any other federal, state, regional, or local agency?

Yes (Specify FHWA - EA) No

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals:

Order of Conditions, Canton Conservation Commission; Section 404 Permit, U.S. ACOE;

NEPA Environmental Assessment, FHWA; Section 106 Review, Massachusetts Historical Commission

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

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

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
LAND				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order of Conditions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Superseding Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 91 License <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification <input type="checkbox"/> MHD or MDC Access Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Water Management Act Permit <input type="checkbox"/> New Source Approval <input type="checkbox"/> DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Permits (including Legislative Approvals) – Specify:
Total site acreage	37.4 Acres			
New acres of land altered		18.85 Acres		
Acres of impervious area	10.63 Acres	-1.7 acre	8.93 Acres	
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		Less than 5,000 SF		
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		33,500 sf Riverfront Area		
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		None		
STRUCTURES				<u>Wetlands Protection</u>
Gross square footage				
Number of housing units				
Maximum height (in feet)				<u>Act Variance</u>
TRANSPORTATION				
Vehicle trips per day	I-95-150,000 I-93-170,000	0	I-95-150,000 I-93-170,000	
Parking spaces				
WATER/WASTEWATER				
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use				
GPD water withdrawal				
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment				
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)				

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 Norwood Quadrangle WH 226, PH 844) No

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 _____) No

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

Yes (Specify _____) No

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

Yes (Specify Fowl Meadow and Ponkapoag Bog) 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.

The Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) is proposing transportation improvements to the I-95/I-93/University Avenue and Dedham Street Interchanges in Canton, Dedham and Westwood. (See Figure 1 and Figure 3) The purpose of the project is to improve the operating efficiency and safety of these congested highway interchanges.

The I-95/I-93/University Avenue Interchange has for many years been plagued with high levels of traffic congestion and substandard traffic operations. The most prominent traffic problems include:

- Chronic congestion (LOS F) on the I-95/I-93 mainline (more commonly known as Route 128) between Route 1 and Route 138 during the AM and PM peak periods.
- Chronic congestion (LOS F) and weaving problems at the I-95/I-93 exit and entrance ramps.
- Recurring safety problems, including numerous truck rollovers, on the I-95 northbound ramp.
- Severe congestion (LOS F) at the intersection of University Avenue and Blue Hill Drive causing long queues that occasionally extend beyond the I-95 southbound exit ramp to Blue Hill Drive.

As a result, MassHighway, through the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), undertook the *University Avenue/I-95/I-93 Regional Traffic Study*. This study was prepared in conjunction with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, state and local elected officials, representatives of the affected communities, resource protection organizations, regional planning organizations, and an engineering consultant. A study Task Force was also established. (See Attachment B for Task Force members.)

The TAC and the Task Force reached a consensus on a package of roadway improvements to alleviate traffic problems in the study area. (See Attachment A for the Alternatives Analysis.) Additionally, CTPS presented the proposed improvements to MassHighway in order to ensure the engineering feasibility of each of the proposed improvements and their compatibility with state and federal highway design geometric criteria.

The proposed project involves the following major construction elements:
(See Figures 3, 4 and 5) .

- Replacement of the I-95 northbound entrance ramp with a direct connector ramp;
- A new entrance ramp from University Avenue to I-93 northbound, including the discontinuance of Greenlodge Street west of Elm Street;
- A realigned and improved direct connection between I-93 southbound and I-95 southbound to provide two lanes including a new ramp to Blue Hill Drive;
- A realigned and improved direct connection from I-95 northbound to I-93 northbound to provide two lanes;
- A realigned I-95 southbound exit ramp to Blue Hill Drive;
- A new exit ramp from I-95 northbound to Dedham Street;
- A widened Dedham Street bridge over I-95.

Based on the conceptual design, the project will result in less than 5,000 square feet of wetland alteration. Permanent wetland impacts are estimated at less than 1,000 square feet with the remainder being temporary impacts required for construction. Wetland alteration was initially estimated to be 4.2 acres. However, as the entire project site is within the Fowl Meadow/Ponkapoag Bog Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), minimization of wetland impacts is a priority. MassHighway proposes to use bridges to span wetlands rather than use more traditional embankment fill for the new I-95 ramps.

The project will require an Order of Conditions from the Canton Conservation Commission, a Superseding Order of Conditions and a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Massachusetts DEP, and a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Programmatic General Permit. The anticipated Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW) alteration within the ACEC also requires a Variance from the Massachusetts DEP in accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. MassHighway will work closely with these agencies to ensure that environmental impacts are minimized to the greatest extent practicable and mitigated appropriately.

MassHighway has begun early coordination with environmental agencies and other interested parties to explore environmental opportunities within the interchange area including the discontinued section of I-95 to the north of the interchange known as the "I-95 stub". At a preliminary meeting on July 19, 2002 with representatives from the DEP, MEPA, MDC, Friends of the Blue Hills, and the Neponset River Watershed Association, many options were discussed including constructing wetland and/or open pasture areas, wildlife habitat improvements, interpretive signing along trails, and connectivity improvements to the trail network. MassHighway will continue to coordinate with all concerned parties on this issue throughout the project development process.

An Environmental Notification Form (ENF) is required for this project pursuant to 301 CMR 11.03 (11)(b). The project is within a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern. A mandatory EIR is required pursuant to 301 CMR 11.03 (3) 2. The project results in alteration to BVW requiring a Variance in accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.