

## I-93 Tri-Town Interchange Project

# Scoping Meeting

Thursday, March 19, 2009  
Tewksbury Town Hall  
1009 Main Street, Tewksbury, MA

### AGENDA

**4:00 – 6:00 PM: Open House**

Please visit the open house stations to view information and discuss questions or concerns with project staff.

**6:00 – 6:15 PM: MassHighway Presentation**

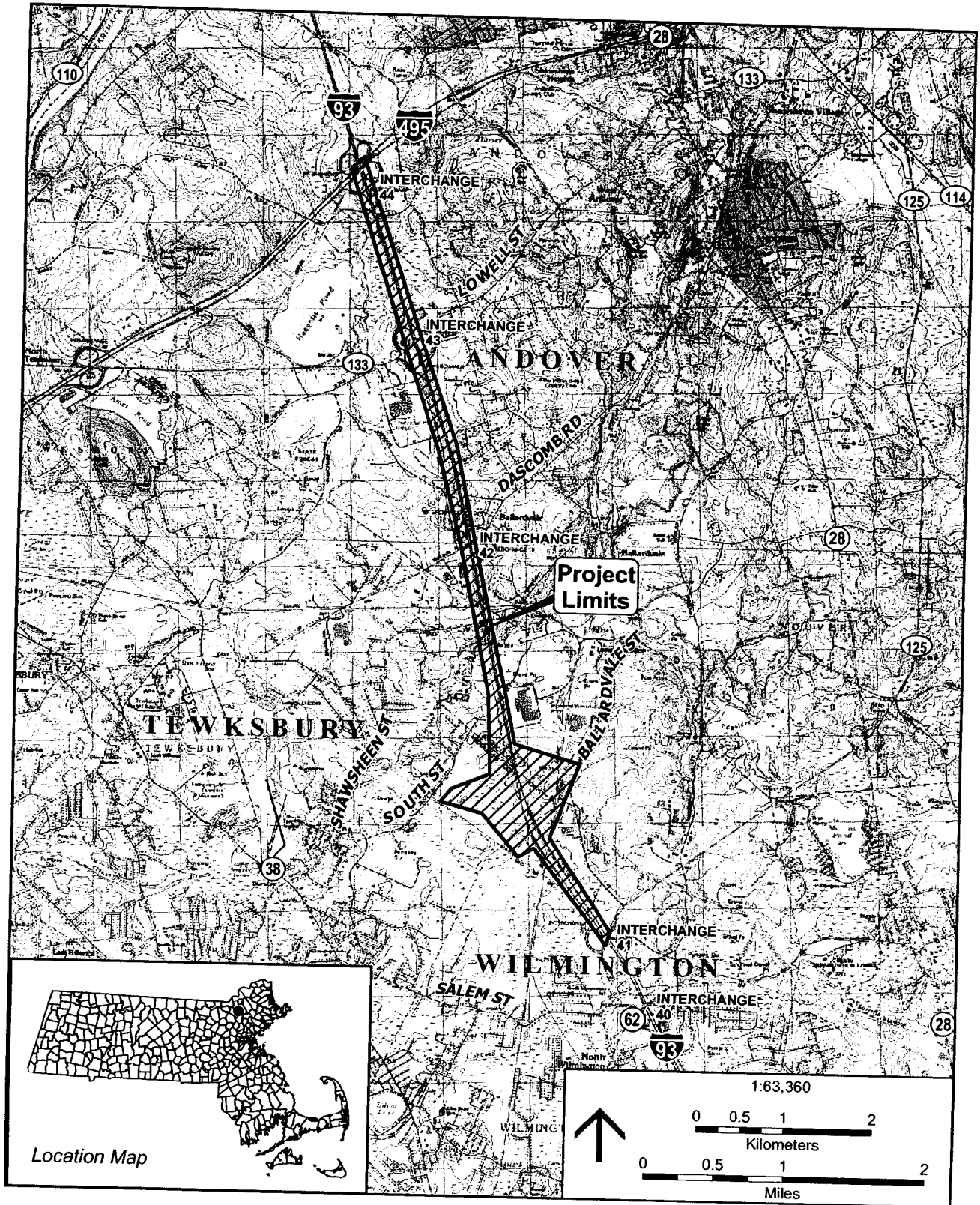
A review of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement and project goals.

**6:15 – 8:00 PM: Question & Answer/Comments**

This is an opportunity for you to provide verbal comments on the goals of the project and let the project team know what you think the priorities should be.

- Please leave comment sheets on the *Draft Purpose and Need Statement* with project staff or mail them to the Federal Highway Administration at the address provided on the form.
- Future comments should be directed to:  
Frank A. Tramontozzi, Chief Engineer  
Attn: Steve McLaughlin  
Massachusetts Highway Department  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3170  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116





Portion of Lawrence, South Groveland,  
Reading, and Wilmington 7.5' USGS quadrangles.  
Scanned quadrangles supplied by EOE, MassGIS.  
Date of quad: 1987.

**Figure 1**  
**Site Locus Map**  
**I-93 Tri-Town Interchange Project**  
**Andover, Tewksbury, and Wilmington Mass.**

## **I-93 Tri-Town Interchange**

### **Project Draft Purpose and Need**

The DEIR/DEIS has been prepared to provide environmental analyses for the proposed break-in access interchange and associated extensions of a fourth travel lane on I-93 in Andover, Tewksbury and Wilmington, Massachusetts. The project Purpose and Need is summarized below.

#### **Project Purpose**

The primary purpose of the I-93 Tri-Town Interchange is to reduce congestion on both the immediate local roadway network and the regional (Interstate) highway network; improve safety on the Interstate highway network currently compromised by use of the breakdown lane as a peak-hour travel lane; improve safety in adjacent local neighborhoods by reducing cut-through traffic; and eliminate impediments to local and regional job creation and expansion resulting from these transportation deficiencies.

The project will serve the following purposes:

- **Reduce congestion and improve safety on the regional (Interstate) highway network**
- **Reduce congestion and improve safety on the local roadway network**
- **Improve access and mobility within existing commercial / industrial areas**
- **Provide highway access that will lead to job creation and economic expansion**
- **Satisfy state legislative action**
- **Acknowledge broad state, regional and local support**
- **Provide opportunities for increased/improved multi-modal access**
- **Protect environmentally sensitive areas and enhance open space and recreational opportunities**

#### **Project Need**

The need for the I-93 Tri-Town Interchange project has been well-documented in recent transportation planning and economic development efforts by State, regional and local officials. The FHWA has accepted the Interchange Justification Report documenting the specific need for a new interchange within the context of the regional (and local) transportation network. The provision of a fourth lane on I-93 on both northbound and southbound sides north of the project area has been identified in long-range planning efforts by all three regional planning commissions / MPOs. The economic development and job creation component of the project is so critical to the Commonwealth that the recently signed Life Sciences Investment Bill (Chapter 130 of the Acts of 2008) includes funding for a new interchange at this location.

The overriding public benefit provided by the I-93 Tri-Town Interchange project rests in its ability to address the following issues:

- *Accessibility and mobility in the Junction commercial /industrial area are inadequate*
- *Local roadways serving residential neighborhoods are used as primary access to the Junction commercial / industrial area, and are inadequate for such use*
- *Economic development is constrained by traffic congestion and poor access*
- *Peak-period use of the I-93 breakdown lanes is permitted to offset capacity deficiencies*
- *The Governor and state legislature have mandated infrastructure improvements through the Life Sciences Investment Bill*
- *Stewardship of sensitive environmental areas will be compromised without coordinated planning efforts*
- *Disposal of hazardous materials from Superfund site requires travel through residential neighborhoods*
- *Opportunities for increased transit use and reduction of Single-Occupant-Vehicle (SOV) travel are constrained*
- *Opportunities for enhanced open space and recreational use are constrained*

### **Project Study Area**

The principal study area and I-93 corridor are shown in the attached figure. The I-93 Tri-Town Interchange study area encompasses portions of Andover, Tewksbury, and Wilmington and the transportation facilities and services that pass through them and provide regional transportation connections.



# I-93 Tri-Town Interchange Project Environmental Review Process

Andover □ Tewksbury □ Wilmington

March 2009

The I-93 Tri-Town Interchange Project is a critical element in the regional highway network and a catalyst for economic development and job creation in the Merrimack Valley. The project's goals are to improve the safe and efficient use of the highway system; relieve congestion on I-93 and on roadways in the surrounding communities of Andover, Tewksbury and Wilmington; improve access to existing industrial and commercial developments; enhance opportunities for sustainable development by encouraging mixed use projects and minimizing environmental impacts; and realize the vision of a proposed life sciences and high technology corridor. MassHighway plans to relieve congestion on I-93 by constructing a new interchange between Interchanges 41 and 42 and adding one travel lane in each direction up to Interstate 495, improving highway safety and access to the regional transportation system.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The project is following a joint federal and state review process. MassHighway is working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office on the state process. Each process has milestones for public review and comment, and MassHighway will include additional opportunities at key points in the process.

### The Federal NEPA Process

To begin the process, MassHighway sent a **Letter of Initiation** to FHWA in March 2008. The agency responded on May 15, 2008. MassHighway submitted a **Notice of Intent** (NOI) to FHWA. The NOI, a formal project announcement, was published on January 26, 2009 in the *Federal Register*. It announced the federal Scoping Meeting on March 19, 2009 to discuss the *Draft Purpose and Need Statement* for the project.

**March 19, 2009 Public Scoping Meeting:** The purpose of the scoping meeting is to discuss the *Draft Purpose and Need Statement* for the project. The *Draft Purpose and Need Statement* outlines the need for the project and the goals and purposes it will serve. Members of the public, business owners, elected and municipal officials are encouraged to participate and comment on the goals of the project. Alternatives that will be evaluated must meet the purpose and goals outlined in the Statement. FHWA also consults with state and federal agencies, which will have a role in permitting the project, to produce a scope of work for the project. Because similar information is required for federal and state review, FHWA and MEPA expect to produce a single scope for the project so that MassHighway can produce its final recommendations in a combined document known as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR).

*To come:*

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement, DEIS:** With an approved scope of work, MassHighway and its consultants collect the data and information supporting the Purpose and Need Statement, analyze the project alternatives and begin preliminary design. This work will include site investigations; environmental and traffic reviews; air quality and noise investigations; and meetings with the communities, regional planning agencies, business owners, residents and the public. The first product will be a draft alternatives analysis, which will be submitted for public review in summer 2009. The DEIS/DEIR is scheduled for completion in January 2010. The document will be reviewed by federal agencies and the public, and a final alternative will advance to begin design. With 25% design complete, MassHighway will submit a Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/FEIR) for agency and public review later in 2010.

**Record of Decision:** After there has been a hearing and the public comment period is closed, there will be a Record of Decision, a document that outlines the approved project. MassHighway will begin work on final design.

### **The State MEPA Process**

*Completed:*

MassHighway submitted an **Environmental Notification Form (ENF)** on the interchange project to MEPA and received a Certificate from the Secretary of Environmental Affairs with a scope of work on February 8, 2008. A **Notice of Project Change (NPC)** was prepared because the project now includes adding a lane to I-93 between Interchange 41 and Interstate 495. MassHighway filed the NPC with MEPA and it was published in the *Environmental Monitor* on February 11, 2009. The public comment period closes on April 20, 2009 and a MEPA certificate is expected on or about May 1, 2009.

*To come:*

**Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)** – This is the state version of the environmental impact investigation and report. MassHighway's goal is to prepare a combined document for the federal and state review processes. Massachusetts calls this document a Draft Environmental Impact Report, or DEIR. The filing will be a combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report, or DEIS/DEIR.

**Secretary's Certificate:** After agency and public review of the DEIR, the Secretary of Environmental Affairs will issue a final scope of work for the project. MassHighway anticipates that FHWA and MEPA will discuss the scope and develop similar project objectives.

### **SUMMARY**

The federal NEPA and state MEPA processes have similar goals: to identify the least environmentally damaging alternative that also protects public health and safety while meeting the project purpose and need. The processes move in parallel, and the parties will consult with each other with the goal of producing joint documents and arriving at similar conclusions.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Highway Administration**

**Environmental Impact Statement:  
Essex and Middlesex Counties, MA**

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** The FHWA is issuing this notice, in accordance to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing regulations contained in 23 CFR part 771, to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for proposed highway improvements and an interchange project on Interstate 93 (I-93) in Essex and Middlesex Counties, Massachusetts.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** John McVann, Director of Project Delivery, Federal Highway Administration, 55 Broadway Floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142, Telephone: (617) 494-2416.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FHWA, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway), will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on a proposal to improve I-93 in Essex and Middlesex Counties, Massachusetts. The proposed project would involve highway improvements to I-93 and the construction of a new break-in-access interchange near the Andover/Tewksbury/Wilmington town borders. Improvements to the I-93 corridor were examined in the Route I-93 Corridor Traffic Study finalized in 2004 and endorsed by the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The proposed break-in-access was the subject of an Interchange Justification Report dated July 2006, and conditionally approved by FHWA pending the completion of the NEPA process. Because it is anticipated that the resulting project may allow for general economic development opportunities, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) is a partnering agency with MassHighway in this project.

The proposed project is to provide improvements for the existing and projected traffic demand, as well as to improve safety in the area where the use of the breakdown lane is allowed for regular vehicle travel during morning and evening peak periods. The proposed interchange will provide access to all three towns including potential new development sites. Alternatives under consideration include: (1) Taking no

action; (2) Transportation Demand Management (TDM); (3) using alternate travel modes; (4) providing improvements at other local and interstate roadway network locations; and (5) constructing a new interchange. Design variations of grade, alignment, and access will be incorporated into and studied with the various build alternatives.

A formal scoping meeting will be held at the Tewksbury Town Hall Auditorium on March 19, 2009, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. (EST) for the participating agencies, and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. (EST) for the general public. Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A series of public meetings will be held in Andover, Tewksbury and Wilmington, Massachusetts throughout 2009. In addition, a public hearing will be held within 60 days of the availability of the draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

Comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties during the appropriate step in the NEPA process to ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: January 15, 2009.

Lucy Garliauskas,  
Division Administrator.

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