



To:	Mike O'Dowd MassDOT Project Manager	Date:	April 30, 2019
From:	Doug Johnson Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2013061.14
Subject:	Massachusetts Department of Transportation Allston Multimodal Project Task Force Meeting #37 Meeting Notes of April 24, 2019		

Overview

On April 24, 2019, members of the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project team and associated MassDOT staff held the 37th Task Force meeting for the project. The Task Force is composed of local residents, business owners, transportation, and open space advocates, as well as representatives of local and state agencies. The purpose of the group is, through the application of its members' in-depth knowledge, to assist and advise the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) in determining a single preferred alternative to be selected by the Secretary of Transportation for documentation in a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) document.

At this Task Force meeting, staff from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) gave a presentation outlining the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) permitting process for the project. Since the project includes redesigning an Interstate Highway, the FHWA must conduct the NEPA process in order for a preferred alternative to be selected and granted permits from relevant federal agencies. At the conclusion of the process, the FHWA will submit a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). This process takes place concurrently with the state process of submitting a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). Task force commentary regarding the federal environmental process chiefly focused on how the federal and state processes will align going forward through project development and where opportunities for public input will be available during that process.

Following the presentation, Jim Keller of Tetra Tech gave a presentation outlining one potential construction staging scheme for the "throat" area of the project, based on the Modified Hybrid

Alternative design. Staging for two versions of the Modified Hybrid Alternative, Soldiers Field Road over I-90 Westbound and Soldiers Field Road over I-90 Eastbound, were presented for discussion by members of the Task Force. Generally, the construction staging schemes presented are very similar between the two versions of the Alternative. During the presentation of alternatives, task force members were chiefly concerned with the maintenance of all modes present in the throat during construction. While the idea that the project team was looking at some kind of temporary Paul Dudley White pathway over the Charles River water sheet as opposed to detouring the path to the Cambridge bank of the river was well-received, significant concern was voiced over the idea that the Worcester Main Line might need to be taken to a single track for several hundred yards through the project area during an as-yet unspecified part of construction.

Agenda

I.	Welcome & Opening Remarks	2
II.	Presentation by the Federal Highway Administration	4
III.	Presentation on Construction Staging	14

Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

Welcome & Opening Remarks

C: Ed Ionata: Hi everyone and welcome. We have a pretty full agenda for tonight. George is going to speak for about 15 minutes, and then we have a presentation from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that will be about 45 minutes, leaving an hour or so for a presentation on construction staging. We'll give you a quick preview of staging at a simplified level, which may satisfy many attendees, but after that we can go into the details and drawings for construction. We have some new folks here tonight, so I'd like to quickly go around the room and do introductions.

Project team members and task force members then introduced themselves. For a list of attendees, please see the attendee list at the end of this document.

¹ Herein "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1. For copies of meeting flipcharts, please see Appendix 2.

- C: George Batchelor:** Last week I had the pleasure of attending a charrette sponsored by the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) that was focused on what we've come to call the "throat". I won't go too deep into the details. I just want to give you an overview of what happened, because I think we'll want to discuss this more at a future Task Force meeting. The event was pretty successful, more than 100 people were there. It was put together with support from some members of the task force. Tom Nally and Glen Berkowitz from A Better City, and Tad Read and Jess Robertson were there presenting. I sat in on the different sessions. Just to give you an idea of what it was about, the process focused on the throat, and there were three concurrent discussions. This was what we call a "blue sky" visioning exercise. One part looked at something that is technically not part of this project, the Agganis [pedestrian] Bridge. That's a possible future connection extending Agganis way across the throat area over to the Paul Dudley White Path. One group discussed that. Another session was on the throat section itself. That is really where the park section is squeezed and so we looked at different ways to program that space. The third portion was what they called the "Nexus". It looked at the way the project connects to Commonwealth Avenue, and path connections from Commonwealth Avenue down to the river. Some good ideas and interesting principles came out of that. I won't go further into it because I think it merits a deeper discussion than we have time for today. The BSA has said they will pull graphics together and publish something about the charrette. That's my takeaway from the event.
- C: Ed Ionata:** Thanks George. Now we're going to have a presentation about the NEPA process from FHWA. Ken Miller will introduce the speakers and give some background.
- C: Ken Miller:** Thank you Ed. I'd like to introduce the two folks leading the effort for FHWA. First is Cassie Ostrander who is our Environmental Analyst in the Massachusetts Division, and second is Melissa Toni, from the New York division. They'll talk about the NEPA process, NEPA stands for the National Environmental Policy Act. They'll talk about what the triggers are for the process, and go over briefly the schedule, etc.

Basically, the NEPA process is an independent and objective review of the alternatives to try to reach a conclusion on a preferred alternative and any associated mitigation. We're not going to be starting from scratch. We'll be building on all of the good work that MassDOT and the task force have done over the past four or five years. For example, the Secretary of Transportation has suggested that the modified hybrid in the Throat area is the most appropriate solution, and I know that has a lot of support from people on the task force. I imagine that as we go through the process, we'll be reviewing those alternatives and evaluating them, and I imagine that we will most likely reaffirm that conclusion. In the interchange area, west of the throat, things may be less settled. We have some thought about tweaking some of the designs that you've seen. We've

asked our folks in our headquarters in Washington to look at it, and we'll be working with MassDOT and you folks on the Task Force to explore that and see what of those ideas make sense.

Briefly, I want to discuss the role of FHWA. We will not be conducting the process, that's on MassDOT and its consultants. Our role is to oversee the process and make sure it is done in accordance of all federal laws and regulations and make ensure the mobility and safety of all users and make sure anyone who is impacted by the project is fairly considered. We will also work to facilitate and coordinate between the other federal agencies that are involved, and we will also take appropriate approval actions.

I also want to mention, I've been fortunate enough to participate in the task force which has been going for a few years now, and I've learned a lot about this very complex and important project. Moving forward, since we'll have to take approval actions, it would be inappropriate for us to actually be on the task force, but we will continue to attend meetings to serve as a resource and to listen to what folks have to say. With that, I'd like to turn it over to Cassie and Melissa.

Presentation by the Federal Highway Administration

- C: Cassie Ostrander:** – Thank you Ken. I'd like to start by introducing myself and telling you about my background. I graduated college and immediately started working for FHWA. I have about nine years of experience, most of which was at our office up in Augusta, Maine as an Environmental Engineer. I moved to Massachusetts a little over a year ago, partly because I wanted to work on bigger projects, and the first project on my plate is Allston. So, I'm glad to be here. I'm the Environmental Protection Specialist for the project and I work out of our office over in Cambridge. I look forward to being involved in this process.
- C: Melissa Toni:** Hi everyone, my name is Melissa Toni. I am from our New York Division, which is located in Albany. I have about 20 years of experience. I grew up in Connecticut and worked as a biologist for many years. I ended up moving all over the northeast and I worked for the US Army Corp of Engineers before working for FHWA. Like Cassie I'm really interested in big projects. I have a lot of experience with Environmental Impact Statements for large projects. I worked as the environmental lead for the Tappan Zee Bridge project. That's part of the reason why I'm now working on this project. Cassie and I are teamed up to help you deliver this project.
- C: Cassie Ostrander:** Tonight, we're going to be talking about the NEPA process. We'll give you an overview of some of the important milestones, talk about some of the requirements, and then go over the schedule and timeframe. First, I wanted to let you know it's about 50 years since

NEPA was passed. It was passed in 1969 and signed into law on January 1, 1970. It's one of the first environmental laws that was passed. It requires federal agencies to consider environmental effects of their actions. When I say "environmental effects" that includes social, economic, ecological, effects that we need to take into consideration. Also, when we are talking about effects, we don't just mean direct effects, we have to take into account indirect and cumulative effects. Federal agencies have to consider all of that if they have an action like a federal approval, a federal permit or federal funding. For this project, the current proposal is to modify the interchange. That triggers our involvement. MassDOT has to send an interchange access system modification request to us, and we have to make sure the interchange will still be safe, mobility will still occur, and that approval triggers FHWA to come in and be involved in the project. Other federal agencies will also be involved, but we're the lead.

I also want to mention the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). NEPA required a process be gone through, the Council was established to determine how that process actually works and the actual regulations. Throughout this process we'll be looking at the CEQ regulations as well as FHWA regulations.

FHWA coined the term the "NEPA umbrella" which is FHWA's policy to coordinate all environmental investigations, reviews, studies, etc. under one process. All of these laws shown on this slide, plus many more, must be complied with prior to us making the NEPA approval. Some laws, like the Endangered Species Act for example, will likely have minimal impacts from this project, based on what I know about it so far. Northern Long Eared Bats might be in the range on this area, but right now I believe they are not present in the project area. So that's a law that is an easy check for example. We'll do the research necessary, submit the appropriate documents, we won't need to coordinate with the Fish and Wildlife Service, so we'll do that work and be done. Other laws aren't that easy, and some of them may determine the critical path for the project. For example, Section 4F and 106. So again, NEPA coordinates all of these as one process.

Getting into the overview, this slide shows some important milestones that we wanted to highlight tonight. One of the first steps is to determine the class of action. FHWA has determined that we need an EIS in Allston. Another important milestone is to consider environmental impacts. Please note I'm using effects and impacts synonymously. We're required to look at the no-build alternative. That's also known as the No-Action Alternative. It needs to be studied and it's used as a baseline with which to evaluate all of the other alternatives. We are also required to study a reasonable range of build alternatives. You've gone through extensive process since 2014. The Independent Review Team (IRT), Draft Environmental Impact Report

(DEIR), preferred alternative. I know you've gone through an extensive process so far; you have a DEIR and you had the IRT, and you've gotten to a great place where you have a preferred alternative. We'll use that information, all of that data, analysis and process, to back up our processes, but we do have to make sure that what has been done to date complies with the federal process. They'll likely go in tandem. Lastly, there is a need to mitigate all adverse effects. Now I'll hand it over to Melissa to talk about NEPA requirements and the EIS process.

C: Melissa Toni: Thanks Cassie. I'm going to go over NEPA requirements. There are 5 for NEPA in essence, as far as the process goes. One is Notice of Intent (NOI), the second is Scoping, the third is DEIS, the fourth is a combined FEIS and Record of Decision, and finally there is construction. This slide has a timeline to show you relative time for how long some of these elements take. They are fairly similar to the Massachusetts DEIR process, so they shouldn't be too unfamiliar to you.

Let's talk about Scoping. What do we do in Scoping? We are a few months out from issuing a NOI to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The next document after that is a scoping package. It has four major items. It identifies the Purpose and Need for the project, and as Cassie said, you're pretty far along this road already, so we don't anticipate a lot of work being needed to prepare this document. The next is it identifies the range of alternatives, identifies adverse environ impacts that will be addressed in the EIS, and it provides an opportunity for public and cooperating agency involvement. Not only is that open to the public for you all to provide comments, it allows all of the federal agencies that were shown on the slide earlier, we call them cooperating agencies, to have the opportunity to comment on this document.

After scoping, and also during and through scoping, we're going to consider comments by the public and cooperating agencies on those items. The DEIS goes further, and you have a DEIR already, which is very similar, but again it needs to comply with federal regulations. The DEIS will identify the preferred alternative. We know you are there at this point. It will also analyze all effects of all reasonable alternatives. Now, alternatives is a broad word. Let's say there is the preferred alternative, under that, there could be multiple options, design tweaks, sub options, things like that, that aren't rising to the level of alternative. We will consider all of that in the DEIS.

The DEIS will go out for comments through the Federal Register process, and it will be open for 45 days. We will most likely be meeting with other agencies, to make sure we meet their requirements. Then, part of the DEIS is to identify mitigation. We call it mitigation and we also refer to it as Environmental Performance Commitments (EPCs). That might be a new term to

you. Mitigation is made up of three different levels, avoiding an impact, minimizing an impact, and compensatory mitigation. That all gets wrapped up into what we call EPCs. Let's say, for instance, a wetland needs to be crossed, and your typical road has 2 to 1 side slopes that come out from either side pretty far. The Corps of Engineers may say you need to minimize this, so MassDOT as the applicant says they can build a retaining wall instead of the slopes. We would write an EPC that says a retaining wall is committed to in that location. That's what that process looks like. So, as we're developing the DEIS, the EIS and Record of Decision, we're developing that list.

At the end of the process is the FEIS and Record of Decision. This is now combined. It used to be separate, and there was a 30 days gap between the FEIS and the Record of Decision, but now our regulations require these to be issued jointly. Both documents will consider substantive public and cooperating agency comments. We will close the comment period for the DEIS, gather all of the comments, and consider all of them. We will then identify the preferred alternative. I mentioned that as part of the DEIS. The difference here is in this case we will declare that alternative as the one we will build. We will list out the mitigation, the EPCs, and we will document the basis for the decision.

Now I'll turn it back over to Cassie to talk about what happens when we start constructing this project.

C: Cassie Ostrander: We wanted to let you know that after we finalize everything, we stay involved. We have a stewardship and oversight agreement with MassDOT that lays out roles and responsibilities. Part of our role is to oversee some construction activities. It is very likely that this project is one where we do site visits, field checks, potentially look at contract documents, make sure environmental commitments made during the NEPA process are transferred to the construction documents and those commitments are kept. We remain involved. We need to make sure that the commitments that are made during the NEPA process are actually carried out as the project is implemented.

Lastly, I'll talk about schedule. We are on track to publish a NOI to prepare an EIS this summer most likely. It takes about 24 months for completion of NEPA. That leads us to a Record of Decision in Summer 2021. During this process, we will have a lot of public involvement, we'll be coordinating with MassDOT and reaching out to the task force, during periods throughout the process and specifically during the scoping and DEIS stage. Those are the specific milestones that are required by regulations to have a public comment period, but I do anticipate that we'll be reaching out for public comment throughout the process. One more thing, once we sign the

Record of Decision, we are required to have all federal permits within 90 days. With that, we will open to questions. Thanks.

Q: No Name Given: This project takes both parkland and historic land and involves Section 4F and 106. How does FHWA look at that and decide what is feasible? What's your approach?

A: Cassie Ostrander: We know there is historic land and parkland in the area. We need to go through the 4F process. We start with identification and analyze the alternatives and their impacts to those resources, and we take that into consideration in making our decision.

A: Melissa Toni: What we're required to do under NEPA regulations is to give a hard look in the EIS to all impacted resources. We have procedures that guide that process.

Q: Wendy Landman: You said you'd be soliciting public comment. Is there actually a public process or is it all written comments? Are you planning on having meetings?

A: Melissa Toni: It's not decided yet. There will be a public involvement plan that will be used. We require that, and that will lay out whether there is a meeting, or open house or just written comments for example. Typically, we do have something with a presentation.

Q: Wendy Landman: Would that be happening while you're working on scoping?

A: Melissa Toni: It would be in between the Notice of Intent and Scoping.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: Prior to tonight, we were told the state had finished the DEIR, and the next step was to submit the FEIR later this year. Is that still true?

A: Mike O'Dowd: Yes, we are pursuing filing of the MEPA notice of project change at the end of this year or early next.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: My question is, with what we expected the project to be doing relative to the state document, and the new things you've talked about tonight, is it your expectation the processes will be combined in the future?

A: Cassie Ostrander: The state process is well underway, and we're just beginning the federal process. The DEIR was issued in 2017 I believe, so we're behind on our side, but I believe our intent is to issue the FEIS at the same time as the FEIR, so we would mirror up the two processes moving forward.

Q: Wendy Landman: So, the FEIR will be issued in 2 years?

A: Mike O'Dowd: Yes.

A: Cassie Ostrander: If we mirror up the two processes, which was my impression, the FEIR and FEIS ROD would be issued Summer 2021.

Q: Bill Deignan: So, why would there be a filing this year?

A: Mike O'Dowd: As it turns out, as a result of the NEPA process getting underway right now, we don't anticipate filing the FEIR by the end of this year. In order to bring them into line with each other, so that we'll have parallel processes, we'll delay filing the FEIR until we have a DEIS ready to be filed. That way both major environmental documents are being undertaken at the same time.

C: Jim Cerbone: Because we didn't evaluate the IRT in the DEIR, we'll submit a Notice of Project Change with the DEIS.

Q: Harry Mattison: Will there also be a Notice of Project Change to MEPA?

A: Jim Cerbone: Yes

Q: No Name Given: In the two year process, when will the DEIS be filed?

A: Melissa Toni: The state can decide that schedule. Some things need to be completed beforehand, like traffic modeling for instance, but there is a lot of leeway. I'm not sure what the anticipated date is.

Q: No Name Given: My other question is, can you review the types of EPCs again and give some examples?

A: Melissa Toni: The three types are avoidance, minimalization, and compensatory mitigation. I'll refer back to the wetland example I used earlier. Avoidance would be a bridge over a stream instead of a culvert for example. If you proposed a culvert crossing that had a wetland impact, the Corps of Engineers may ask you to avoid that if possible, so avoidance would be building a bridge instead. We would capture that as an EPC. Minimalizing would be the retaining wall example I gave earlier instead of those long slopes. Compensatory mitigation, in the wetland example, would be building new wetlands somewhere else to make up for the wetlands filled in by a project. These are just examples but that applies to every resource.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: If, before tonight, we were expecting the state to file a FEIR this year, they usually do things like that the week of Christmas each year, so if it was December of this year, you're now thinking this combined document is now 2021?

A: Melissa Toni: We don't have a schedule yet for the DEIS. It can be as early as 2019 or into 2020. It probably won't go into 2021. We have a lot of leeway in the 24 month process to publish the DEIS and then the Notice of Project Change.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: But for the federal document, it would be submitted around what month of what year?

A: Melissa Toni: We don't have a schedule for the DEIS. If you're referring to the Record of Decision, that's 24 months from the Notice of Intent. In June or July of this year we expect that to be published, then it's a two year process. The DEIS is somewhere in the middle of that.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: The second part of that question is, prior to tonight, we had all heard about a federal review, and I think in the schedule it was assumed that FHWA would do the an environmental assessment (EA), but you've decided an EIS is required, so my question is, is there a federal document that tells MassDOT that an EA is not enough and an EIS is required, and if so can you share that with us?

A: Melissa Toni: We don't have that document yet. It has not been produced and released yet.

Q: Glen Berkowitz: When do you think it will be produced and released?

A: Melissa Toni: As soon as possible. We're hoping in the next month.

Q: Wendy Landman: Sorry, we're process types here. I misunderstood and thought you said the FEIR and FEIS would come out at the same time, but that's not the case...

A: Cassie Ostrander: No, you are right. The NOPC and DEIS will be joint, and then the FEIR and the FEIS will be joint.

Q: Wendy Landman: So, the FEIR and FEIS will come out in summer 2021?

A: Melissa Toni: That is the goal.

Q: Wendy Landman: So, there won't be another formal state filing before then other than the NOPC?

A: Melissa Toni: That's correct, and that will come out with the DEIS.

Q: Galen Mook: I have one suggestion and then a question. It might help if the project team had a flow chart. That might clear this up. One question I have, how does FHWA view temporary impacts vs permanent impacts? How is an impact of 5 months viewed verses an impact of 5 years or more in terms of avoidance, minimization, etc.?²

A: Melissa Toni: We view them the same. We look at them with the same lens, we evaluate what the impact is and if it is adverse. With temporary impacts, an area will likely go back to the way it was before the impact after the project is over, however there is a temporal impact as well, so we'll take a hard look at that to determine if there needs to be avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation.

Q: Galen Mook: How does the permitting change based on how long the impact is?

A: Melissa Toni: The permits are issued by the various federal agencies; we issue the authorization. Different agencies have different regulatory definitions of what is temporary and what is permanent, and it's most likely based on case law. But they're the same as us in that they look at both temporary and permanent impacts. Even if an impact is only 6 months, that might be the growing stage of a specific fish in a project area, so we look at impacts of any length of time.

Q: No Name Given: The process won't be a black box until the very end, right? The various agencies will be involved and providing input?

A: Melissa Toni: We call them "agencies with expertise". They will be providing comments and input to us from day 1 and throughout the process, so that there are no surprises at the end. We have procedures for that throughout the process.

Q: Harry Mattison: You mentioned that after a temporary impact an area is usually returned to its pre-impacted state. How do you feel about improving it instead?

² See appendix two for a flow chart of environmental permitting prepared to help clarify the way in which the state and federal environmental processes fit together. While this chart was shared with the task force at their May meeting in response to the session documented herein, it is included with this set of minutes to help clarify the conversation.

- A: Melissa Toni:** That's part of the entire package. We look at all of that in the total package. We look at the impact, is it temporary or permanent, how is it being avoided, minimized or mitigated, etc.
- Q: Harry Mattison:** You mentioned at the beginning that we have a preferred alternative but also having sub-options within the alternative. Could you clarify that?
- A: Melissa Toni:** We see that on big projects where you have a lot going on. It would be some nuances, like ramp configurations, for example. There will probably be things like that with this project.
- Q: Harry Mattison:** Is the way the process works, when you start the scoping, can we suggest other options in our comments that we would like you to require MassDOT to study?
- A: Melissa Toni:** That's a comment that is completely acceptable.
- Q: Jessica Roberts:** So, if you get 10 sub-options, who picks which configuration of those things is in the final design?
- A: Cassie Ostrander:** That happens through the process in coordination with the other agencies. As you do all of the analyses, trying to comply with all environmental laws, that leads you to the final preferred alternative.
- Q: Jessica Roberts:** So, if the DEIS has sub-options, does the FEIS only have one option?
- A: Melissa Toni:** That's correct. The Record of Decision will be what we want to construct.
- Q: Wendy Landman:** We've been told by MassDOT that this is design/build. That means the design isn't done until during construction, so there are lots of choices left about how things are going to be resolved. How do that fit into what you just said?
- A: Melissa Toni:** We have very specific design/build regulations. We encourage design/build. The military has been doing it for 30 years, and it's been implemented across the country very successfully. We welcome innovations from the private sector and solution that maybe wouldn't have been thought of otherwise. Our regulations have been redone to welcome the design/build process. Design/build and NEPA do allow for some flexibility in contracting. When we write the ROD, that is for a project to be constructed, but it does not dictate the means and methods for how to build that project. The Design Builder has a lot of leeway on how to build a project.

Q: Wendy Landman: So, the build side can be changed but not the design side? We know it's not fully designed in the EIS, but to some extent is it designed?

A: Melissa Toni: We still need basic alignment and impacts in that document. Sometimes we'll include what we call an envelope of impacts. Here's an example, we know in the NEPA document, a bridge goes from here to here, and we know it won't deviate up or down stream, but how will it look? We don't know and that's ok. Maybe we don't know where the piers are going to go in the river, but we know there will be a navigation channel, and the bridge has to clear and maintain that, but we don't dictate how the bridge is built. We'll write into the document that the contractor has to stay above that channel. That way the design/build entity knows what they're bidding on and what standards they have to follow. But there will be some flexibility. Maybe they want to span the entire thing with a suspension bridge instead. What we're going to cover in the NEPA document in a case like that is the worst-case impacts. So if something comes in better then we all win.

Q: No Name Given: As you develop this process, can you build in direct interaction in this task force and indicate it on the schedule to show what will have been reviewed at each time, so the public can see that process?

A: Melissa Toni: The FHWA stays within our regulations, which is public comment during two phases, scoping and the DEIS. MassDOT as the sponsor can take that further, but your question should be directed to them. We also can't sit on the task force, but if they request us to speak, we can come to a meeting.

Q: No Name Given: Design/build boils down to value engineering. How is something like aesthetics and design quality monitored through a design/build process?

A: Melissa Toni: We can't speak to contract nuances at this time. We're not there yet.

A: Rich Lenox: People have to remember that even at the end of the environmental process, the project hasn't been designed. There are still a lot of details to work out. The ROD lays out the framework but within that the details are still needed.

Q: David Loutzenheiser: Much of the discussion in this process is based on the river and the impacts to it. My question is, these river boundaries are fairly new, they're not older than 120 or so years. The river wasn't dammed until 1910. Are you looking at impacts based on what it is today?

- A: Melissa Toni:** We look at impacts to what exists today. I understand that there are historical environmental impacts, but today is the baseline. That's why we evaluate the no-build alternative.
- C: Ed Ionata:** There are state agencies that pick up the historic tidelands that are part of the list of agencies under the NEPA umbrella. Unfortunately, we're running out of time so let's take one more question and then move onto the next topic on the agenda, but we can talk about this more at later meetings.
- Q: No Name Given:** What is the scope of the EIS? Will it include city streets and West Station or just I-90?
- A: Cassie Ostrander:** It will include the possibility for west station, as it will include I-90, Soldiers Field Road, the Paul Dudley White path, etc.
- A: Rich Lenox:** The scope is driven by the Purpose & Need.
- C: Ed Ionata:** Thank you Cassie and Melissa. Now, Jim Keller is going to do an overview of construction staging.

Presentation on Construction Staging

- C: Jim Keller:** Hi everyone. We put out the draft staging plans yesterday. They're focused on the throat area. We're tying this into the 3K interchange to make sure this works at a preliminary level. We're looking at the Soldiers Field Road viaduct over Westbound I-90, and the viaduct over Eastbound I-90. We're referring to them as such for the ease of discussion. The Independent Review Team put Soldiers Field Road over I-90 Westbound, which we're studying, and we're also studying putting the Soldiers Field Road viaduct over I-90 Eastbound. We're looking at these from a geometric standpoint in terms of highway design. There is a robust field investigation underway including proposed test pit locations for locating the utilities that were discussed in the March Task Force meeting. That discussion followed the discussion at the February Task Force meeting about the horizontal and vertical highway geometry that we currently have in the plans. During this time, we've looked at how this could be staged. The IRT put some effort into this, but I don't think they had time to develop a staging scheme, so we've picked up on that effort. We're doing our best to see how this could be constructed in a practical way.

As we all know, there are many modes in the throat area to consider, as well as the fact that we need to de-elevate I-90 and take the little Grand Junction Bridge, which currently goes under I-

90, and elevate it over I-90, while maintaining roadway traffic. So, the Grand Junction Line will have to be out of service. These slides may be too much detail for some of you, and not enough for others, but this is a snap-shot of where we are in the process, so please ask questions, and we're open to suggestions. We don't have all of the answer by any means.

We're trying to maintain everything within the throat during construction. As you can see from these plans, that's proving to be tricky. As previously discussed, in the final condition, we've added some shoulder width to I-90 in the narrowest part of the throat area, which is for both safety and for stormwater management. Four-foot shoulders are the absolute minimum width we can have on I-90 both for safety and in order to manage ponding of water in travel lanes during storms. In those shoulders, stormwater infrastructure will be installed to collect and remove that water.

These slides are just highlights that are focused on the throat. We understand people want to see how this ties into to the rest of the interchange. I also want to reiterate that these are preliminary staging concepts, and several elements still need to be further studied by MassDOT. As you know we have to construct the Soldiers Field Road (SFR) viaduct and the Grand Junction Bridges over I-90 and SFR. That's three new bridges that have to be designed, as well as all of the retaining walls and boat slabs that will be needed as some of I-90 will actually be below grade. We still need to study those vertical alignments and the other associated design aspects.

From the feedback we've received we know that some of things listed on this slide are of the utmost importance to some Task Force Members, so we wanted to discuss them. First, regarding what will to happen to the Paul Dudley White path, there is a potential for the closure of that. MassDOT wants us to explore the potential for a floating pedestrian bridge outside of the construction envelope in order to maintain that service during construction.

One thing that I want to emphasize is that these conceptual staging plans don't show a work zone. If you think about the project that took place on Commonwealth Avenue and the equipment that was necessary, there was a lot of major construction sequencing for that project because of the physical constraints of the site. These staging plans only show the throat horizontally. They don't take into account the construction zones that will be in place outside the throat area. Longitudinally, there is access into the throat, but it needs to be further studied.³

³ This should be understood to reflect that due to the extreme narrowness of the throat area at its most constrained points, construction staging will need to be worked out to bring machinery and material in

Now, as you can see, one thing MassDOT is sensitive to is maintaining the Worcester Commuter Rail line at two tracks for as long as possible. But, if you think about the Solders Field Road viaduct, when we're building it, once we have retaining walls in place, we're in a fixed position. So, constructing temporary roadways and rail lines within that cross section becomes difficult. Maintaining two tracks at all times is very difficult, but further study of that is underway in order to increase the duration of two-track operation. For the little Grand Junction Bridge over Soldiers Field Road and I-90, building it while staying away from live traffic also needs further study.

In the transition section on the eastern (towards downtown Boston) end of the throat, the profile of Solders Field Road below the Boston University Bridge has to be lowered slightly, maybe 3 feet, to accommodate the new little Grand Junction Bridge and its increased span in order to allow the Paul Dudley White path to pass underneath it. The boardwalk under the BU Bridge can either stay or be removed in this plan. There is so much that can be done with the Paul Dudley White Path in terms of widths and buffers in this plan. That's just a side note, but I wanted to mention it.

In terms of temporary alignments, as you know I-90 has a lot of sharp curves in this area. We're still looking at how we can improve those and see how they can work as a long-term temporary condition, but what we're showing here has been engineered and a lot of work has gone into it already.

Obviously relocating the large utilities is something else we're looking at. We're looking at how to relocate the 58x63" MWRA sewer line that we talked about at last month's Task Force Meeting, including whether that could temporarily go in the future Paul Dudley White Path corridor in a way that doesn't effect what will be there in the final condition. The water main that crosses perpendicularly across from the Boston University towers is something else we're looking at. We're looking at how it can be relocated so that the Soldiers Field Road viaduct can be as low as possible. Another large utility in the area is the 60-inch drain line. We're trying to get as much info as possible on that. We'll have to cut it pretty quickly to drive I-90 down. So, when these field investigations come through, there will be more discussions with the Task Force about how we can accommodate those utilities.

Another thing I want to note is that we did not provide durations for these stages. We're not at a place yet where we can say how long it will take. Also, in this concept, with what we are

from the east or west rather than north or south. This adds a layer of complexity to staging this portion of the job.

currently showing at the narrowest cross section, with this scheme there are temporary river impacts. Soldiers Field Road would be shifted north so that the viaduct over I-90 Westbound can be constructed while maintaining traffic.

An additional consideration is maintaining all modes of travel. We do not want to simply cut off a section of the Paul Dudley White path; we are looking at our options there very carefully. We want to maintain six travel lanes on I-90, three in each direction, at a minimum. We want to maintain four lanes on Soldiers Field Road, and at least one Worcester line track with the desire to maintain two tracks whenever possible. The Grand Junction Line will have to be closed fairly early in the process and remain closed until the new Grand Junction Bridges and the new alignment is completed in the later stages of construction.

As we go through these plans, keep in mind that we wanted to show this in a way that is easier for everyone to understand and absorb. These don't show all of the details of every stage. The main purpose is to get an overall view and understand the reasoning behind the various stages, as well as why we're showing the temporary Soldiers Field Road shifted to the North, and only one Worcester line track.

The 211-foot overall width of the cross section that you see here has been on all of the cross sections shown to date. That's what we use as the narrowest dimension of the throat area. Outside of this narrow space, the throat gets bigger, so things become easier, comparatively speaking, but we wanted to show you the most challenging section. In the final condition, this 211-foot area must have everything in it. That means two Worcester main line tracks, two Grand Junction Rail tracks, eight lanes of I-90, four lanes of Soldiers Field Road, separate paths for walking and cycling, and buffer space both between the paths and the Westbound barrel of I-90. So, everything fits within that 211 feet that we've been showing on all cross sections to date. This slide shows the existing conditions.

First, we'll go through the staging for the Soldiers Field Road over I-90 Westbound option. In Stage One, we would build the temporary Soldiers Field Road to the north. This goes slightly beyond the 211-foot cross section, so there would be a temporary impact to the river. This also doesn't accommodate everything I mentioned in the bullets on the previous slide. It doesn't show the work zone. After Soldiers Field Road is moved north, the future I-90 Westbound barrel and Soldiers Field Road Viaduct would be constructed.

Q: Wendy Landman: I'm sorry to interrupt but can I ask a quick question? I realize it took an enormous amount of work to get to this point, but to your comment about work zones, why aren't they incorporated into this?

A: Jim Keller: It's a process, and we're trying to be consistent with how staging for different alternatives and variants have been shown in the past. The dimensions shown to date haven't had them built in. We're also looking at this at the most constrained point, the narrowest section of the throat. We don't know what the work zone would be at this location, or what the area in terms of square feet would be. We're not comfortable with talking in absolutes in terms of work zone size or location. We need to see where the process takes us.

Q: Wendy Landman: So, what you're showing, for all intents and purposes, is the absolute minimum width that could ever be accomplished in this section?

A: Jim Keller: Yes, and that's the starting point. We're showing this in order to be consistent with what has always been shown in cross sections. In some places we may need a six-foot work zone, but in others we may only need three feet. Also, our work zones aren't always longitudinal, sometimes they're latitudinal. As such, this is an open question we're still working on, but let me clarify this point: in each of these stages, anything that is being constructed is a work zone. While the temporary Soldiers Field Road is being constructed, that area is a work zone. What I meant before is that we don't know if we'll need additional room, or how much additional room, in addition to the areas under construction in each of these cross sections. Work will take place in and out of the taper, we'll have a longitudinal work zone, coming in and out of the area east and west of the narrowest point, but we don't have specifics beyond that. Things like crane placement and other details still need to be worked out. So that's what I was trying to get at. We're providing work zones during each stage, but we don't have specific details on widths or locations. We're not just saying that all of this will just fall into place. We need to study if having the work zone coming in and out of the taper longitudinally is enough room.

Q: Wendy Landman: So, it's sort of just a footnote then?

A: Jim Keller: That is correct.

C: Ed Ionata: Jim, just to clarify, what you're saying is that you're analyzing this at the most constrained point, but it gets better east and west as it widens out. You're showing what needs to fit here in this location, and the next step would be to see if you can reach into here from the wider section to accomplish what you need to do.

A: Wendy Landman: Thank you, that helps a lot.

A: Jim Keller: Just to reiterate, this is how we've shown this previously, so we wanted to be consistent with that. We wanted to make sure this was an apples-to-apples comparison.

Q: Bill Deignan: I have a process question. As you go through this, are you showing both options (Soldiers Field Road viaduct over I-90 Westbound or Eastbound) for the purpose of discussion, or has a decision already been made about which one will be chosen?

A: Jim Keller: Yes, we are showing both for the purpose of discussion. No decisions have been made about these. We'll summarize the plans, and then we'll have a discussion. We'll get into the details of each, but there is not a drastic difference between the two options in terms of staging. In general work takes place to the northern part of the throat, then the southern part, and finally in the middle. If Soldiers Field Road is over I-90 Westbound, the viaduct construction starts earlier, if it's over I-90 Eastbound, the viaduct construction starts later, but when it comes to completing the viaducts and all of the transitions and connections, ultimately the staging is pretty similar.

So, after the Westbound Soldiers Field Road viaduct is built, we would demolish the eastbound portion of the I-90 viaduct so a temporary corridor for the eastbound roadway can be installed. This is why we're showing the one Worcester line track. This is a fixed structure, horizontally. Once we start de-elevating the viaduct, I-90 has to go somewhere. So, these locations are fixed to some extent. Next, we would demolish the westbound I-90 viaduct and build the below-grade section. So, as you can see this whole area is very constrained.

So that's a snippet of the staging for the Soldiers Field Road viaduct over I-90 Westbound. This slide shows the final condition. Staging is similar for the Soldiers Field Road viaduct over I-90 Eastbound. First, we must go north again and build the temporary road, then demolition happens similarly to the staging I just showed. We'd demolish the eastbound side of the I-90 viaduct and then the westbound side. Again, this has all of the horizontal constraints that I mentioned before, so as each stage progresses and pieces begin to be built, things become fixed in place with no room to shift roadways or rail lines or build additional tracks. This slide shows the final condition.

Q: Tad Read: Is it right that both concepts show a floating Paul Dudley White path and some encroachment by the temporary Soldiers Field Road into the riverbed. I thought the idea was that were avoiding any kind of encroachment into the river due to permitting issues. Does temporary encroachment differ from permanent encroachment?

A: Jim Cerbone: Yes, they are treated differently. As we coordinate with the regulatory agencies, we'll get more information about that as well.

C: Jim Keller: Just to add to this, the boxes we show on these staging plans are not to scale. The cross section is to scale, but these boxes are not to engineering scale.

Q: Laura Jasinski: These cross sections don't show exactly how it will encroach into the river, whether it's cantilevered or something else, correct?

A: Jim Keller: Correct. Exactly how that will happen has not been determined yet.

Q: Jack Wofford: The Charles River Conservancy, WalkBoston, and others, have looked at the benefits of looking at this not only as a highway project but also as a park project. If one could really address the issues of a better embankment, better connectivity between the water and the embankment, would it simplify the project if you did that and got everyone on board and agreed that you're going to move out, 50 or 60 feet for instance, into the river? Would that simplify construction? I guess I'm trying to understand the process. It seems like we're only looking at the narrow section, and the roadway and the stated impacts, but shouldn't that be looked at as well, particularly since you're going into the river anyway?

A: Jim Keller: From a construction perspective, if you need more room and don't have it, there's only one place to get it, which is the river. To the rest of your comment, I'm not sure.

Q: Jack Wofford: It seems to me that these varied interests need to come together and work towards a solution. We're dancing around these issues. Just at the BSA event, they looked at the area, and two groups thought going into the river was a great benefit. How do we get that into the conversation in a meaningful way?

A: Jim Cerbone: We need to bring the regulatory agencies into the discussion. Agencies like the Army Corps of Engineers have not weighed into these discussions yet. That is something that will be taking place as the permitting process moves forward. Our current direction from the Secretary of Transportation is to minimize how much we are going into the river. Now, going into the river temporarily during construction is very different than going into the river permanently. We understand where you're coming from but there is a process that we have to go through.

Q: Jack Wofford: Is that process going to allow an open discussion of the pros and cons of going into the river?

A: Jim Cerbone: There is certainly an open discussion but part of what the Federal Highway Administration stated was that we still need to avoid and minimize impacts. Saying we're going to build right into the river is certainly not avoiding impacts.

- C: Jack Wofford:** I understand the need for that process and that we have to go through it. I'm just saying that it seems to me that one of the alternatives that should be on the table is sort of the opposite of the "no-build", it's saying let's go ahead and do something that has the best long term solution for both people and the environment.
- C: Jessica Robertson:** It sounds like the actual design and planning that has happened to date, and what you're considering, is to only design things that avoid and minimize. What I think many of us have been asking for is for you do to that, to avoid and minimize impacts, but can we also design an option that bakes in the mitigation that will almost certainly be required because it will be impossible for there not to be any impact on the river. Let's think through that and design that on the side so it's part of the discussion.
- C: No Name Given:** I think there are many people around this table who would applaud that idea.
- Q: Glen Berkowitz:** Jim, I don't want to put words in your mouth, so tell me if this is accurate, you're not saying it's a great idea to go into the river, or it's your preferred idea to go into the river in order to stage the project. What I see you presenting is, the Secretary made a decision in January based on the IRT process. The location of I-90 westbound in that decision is unchanged and not under question today. The only question today is whether Soldiers Field Road goes over I-90 westbound or eastbound, but the physical location of I-90 hasn't changed, except that 11 feet was added. And what you're saying is that in order to stage it and meet the commitments for the various modes, you see no choice but to have some amount of impact into the river for some amount of time.
- A: Jim Keller:** That is correct, based on this scheme.
- C: Glen Berkowitz:** My takeaway from that is, there would be agreement around the room that in order to build the project you'd have to do thing that we want anyways. You're saying that in order to stage the project as designed, you have to go into the river.
- A: Ed Ionata:** Jim's assignment is to determine how to build this with the minimum impact to the river. The question that comes out of that is: What does that mean for all the other operations and constraints? What you see tonight is the result of that test.
- C: Glen Berkowitz:** So, it's possible it could grow from what John was just talking about, of course it might not, but I see this as a new starting point.

- C: Ed Ionata:** So, this now moves from avoid to minimize, but you can't say "Once you're in the river let's just go wild."
- C: Jessica Robertson:** That's not fair and I don't think anyone is saying that. The party line to date has been "we can't touch river at all", but the presentation tonight shows that not touching the river at all is not feasible. Therefore, there is some impact, so therefore there should be some mitigation. So, we should start talking about what that looks like, and what the river's edge and parkland will look like.
- C: Ed Ionata:** There are two different ideas around the table. One is what you just said, there is some minimal temporary impact, so there may be a need for mitigation. The other idea is it would be easier to go even further into the river in terms of construction staging, and the answer to that is, yes it would be easier to stage if we could go into the river, but there are a lot of constraints on the federal permitting side and elsewhere that need to be explored. It all circles around the idea of avoiding and minimizing impacts.
- C: Jack Wofford:** I agree with that and the only thing that I would add is, don't lose sight of the benefits side of minimizing impacts. We're not saying fill the river. It's a question of balancing the public good and the environment.
- Q: Harry Mattison:** First, thanks for presenting this. I think it's something we've been eager to see, and it's been the source of many conspiracy theories for a while, so it's great that you guys showed this and put it up for discussion. So, I greatly appreciate that. My question is, Ed, do you characterize this as a minimal temporary impact?
- A: Ed Ionata:** This condition will be for the majority of construction, which is temporary, and that's just in the narrowest point.
- A: Jim Keller:** Part of the point of these slides is to show that in the final condition, everything fits within that cross section. It's only during construction, while Soldiers Field Road is on its temporary alignment, that we're impacting the river.
- Q: Harry Mattison:** But that shows building a four-lane highway in what is today parkland for basically the entire extent of the throat.⁴ How much you're actually going into the water varies from point to point, and whether you're putting it on fill or building a sea wall or piles or whatever is to be determined, but I'd call it a decimation of the parkland that is there now. It

⁴ It is worth noting the point made immediate prior by Ed Ionata regarding showing the river encroachment as being at the narrowest point and not the entire length of the throat.

might be unavoidable, but it clearing the whole throat, from where the guard rail is today to the water line, and paving it with asphalt. I think it raises a ton of issues, and it's not for only a couple months. This is for 6 or 10 years, plus or minus. I think it raises questions about mitigation during construction, because it will last for years. I think the point Jessica and others made was a good one. What's the final state we're trying to achieve? Wouldn't it be great if its way better than what we have now? But when you show the last cross section, you show the same shoreline and slope that we have today.

A: Jim Keller: This schematic hasn't been fully designed. The bank restoration hasn't been designed, so we're showing it as it is today.

C: Harry Mattison: That's sort of a big missing asterisk of "bank restoration to be designed". If we understood and agreed more on the end point, then we can have more informed discussions about the interim state. In the end we want to have things like natural, green stormwater features, along the paths, and a slope down to the river that isn't just what exists today, etc. It changes the whole conversation. The fact that mitigation has to be included in the preferred alternative, and perhaps in the temporary condition as well, we're eager to have that conversation now that it's been started tonight with this new material.

Q: Bill Deignan: This question is related to final condition. we want to know how much space will be left along the river for green space and paths. Thinking back to your comment about the 11 feet of shoulders that have been added, where does that space come from? Does that mean that the park space is now 11 feet narrower than what was shown before?

A: Jim Keller: If by before you mean the IRT, then yes. As we've seen tonight there is only one area to get any additional space at the narrowest point in the throat. That comes out of the open space that had been shown in the IRT variant in the narrowest section. So, the cross section at that location, which we've been showing to you since the February task force meeting, would have 11 feet less of open space than what the IRT presented. We showed you that cross section, with 11 feet less than what the IRT showed, at the February Task Force meeting.

Q: Mary Connaughton: Jim, you said maintaining 2 tracks is going to be very difficult according to this schematic. This is a great opportunity to maintain those two tracks, and to get more people onto the Commuter Rail. I take the Commuter Rail every day. I love it. If you take away that option for god knows how many years, once the people of MetroWest and Worcester understand the plan, there will be an enormous outcry, because they won't be able to get to work. I can't tell you how important it is to maintain two tracks if it's possible.

- A: Jim Keller:** Yes, we agree that it important, and that is why on the slide I showed earlier one of the bullets mentioned further investigations into Commuter Rail operations during construction. We are looking at how that can be done. A lot of it comes down to the location of temporary roadways during construction. Currently these schemes have the temporary I-90 barrels located up against the Worcester main line, so we have to look at the temporary roadway locations. Alignment-wise, everything has to be close to where it will be in its final condition, but we're looking at it.
- C: Mary Connaughtan:** I'm just telling you what the outcry will be. Anything that can be done to address this should be looked at, because there is going to be a loud outcry.
- A: Jim Keller:** It's a major concern of ours and we are looking at it. That is why we listed it on the slide I showed earlier. That slide doesn't cover all of the things we're looking at, but it highlighted the major ones, and I can tell you this is high on the list.
- Q: Tom Nally:** If you were directed by the Secretary to accommodate two tracks for the Worcester main line for as much of the construction period as possible, have you thought about how you would approach that? I'd like to suggest one idea. If you can go back to the section we just saw, if you were to start the demolition on the north side of viaduct and work your way over that way, so you could somehow accommodate the temporary I-90 Eastbound barrel somewhere in that space, is that a possibility to explore?
- A: Jim Keller:** Yes, it would change the demolition sequence, but you still have to put both barrels of I-90 somewhere. Eventually we have to take the I-90 viaduct down and place the new barrels of I-90.
- Q: Tom Nally:** Could you put it in between, in that middle zone of the cross section? Can you change that sequence and think about how to make the transitions work, and then in theory have some area for tracks?
- A: Jim Keller:** For that approach that you're speaking of Tom, we are looking at that. It requires the cross section to grow a little to accommodate that. What we're presenting here, these schemes, are the absolute minimum amount of space we need, but that is something we are studying.
- Q: Pallavi Mande:** Now that you've established that you will be impacting the riverbank on a temporary basis, can you talk about when you'll know what the mitigation will be?

- A: Mike O'Dowd:** That's a discussion we'll be having as we continue to progress in the process. These are just the preliminary staging schematics. As we continue to evaluate what the potential future impacts may be, we'll have that discussion.
- Q: Pallavi Mande:** So, it's safe to assume that conversation will be had soon.
- A: Mike O'Dowd:** Yes, as we move forward and start to have a better understanding of potential impacts, we'll have that conversation.
- C: Steve Kaiser:** I have a quick comment on the presentation. I read through the DEIR where it talks about construction staging, I think it's Chapter 5. The print was very small, so I got out my magnifying glass to read it, and it had Stage 1, 2, 3, etc. And once I understood the difference, I could compare each stage. You couldn't do that tonight because you only used one screen, but if you had three screens up there, or if you did it with boards, you could do a side-by-side comparison.
- C: Jim Keller:** Thank you for your comment. This presentation was not for that purpose. That's why we gave you the sections as PDFs on portrait-oriented pages, so you can look at them side by side and see all of the stages. We also intended to utilize both screens up here and show you the plans side by side after this part of the presentation, but we're running out of time tonight.
- Q: Steve Kaiser:** Can we expect that you'll continue to tell us about the staging sequencing and mitigation and other aspect that haven't been figured out yet as you start to determine those things?
- A: Jim Keller:** Yes absolutely. We've highlighted the major aspects in this presentation and next month and at future task force meetings we can go into more of the details as they're developed.
- C: Jim Cerbone:** Part of the challenge is while we're working on the staging and other aspects, we're still trying to advance the design. Usually you'd advance the design further and then look at how it will be built. So, some of the design aspects need to be worked on more. This presentation was more to give you an overview of everything.
- C: Fred Salvucci:** First, you've done a great job explaining this. This is really complicated stuff. I think the diagrams are simple enough for people to understand, so I commend you for that. Second, I think the word environmental impact means different things to different people, but this is a transportation project, and maintaining accessibility throughout the process all the way from Allston to Worcester, if done badly, will severely disrupt the accessibility of the whole area

out to Worcester. Maintaining accessibility is very important, it's been a given for a long time that the 8 lanes on I-90 will become 6 lanes during construction, so that's already a squeeze, so having the two tracks, the region lived with a single track for 50 years, and that's why the Commuter Rail didn't work well for 50 years, and now that's it's had two tracks, the corridor has grown dramatically, even more than other corridors. With this project it can grow a lot more. That's a much better environmental outcome because it means more people on trains and less people in cars in the long run. So that's every bit an environmental consideration as the river impacts. Everything has to be considered. If the only way to maintain 2 tracks is a bigger river impact, than there should be a bigger river impact in order to maintain two tracks throughout construction. You guys are dealing with very tough constraints, and you need the space in order to make it work. The transportation function itself is a very important environmental issue.

Most environmental processes compare the future state to the present state, and they ask is the future state better than the current or prior state. That's obviously simplified, but that's usually how it works. Some projects, like this one, are unique in that the stresses during construction are greater than those before or after. A lot of environmental permitting agencies take the position, and I'm not questioning it, that if a condition exists for longer than six months it's considered permanent. This condition will exist for at least five or six years. It needs to be seen as a permanent condition in the way it's being conceptualized. You could say when it's all done, let's dig out whatever we put in the river. But if you try to put a retaining wall in the river, you'll have to do a hydrology study to figure out what kind of adverse impacts you'll have, so you probably won't be able to build that. So, you'll probably need to build a reasonably friendly riverbank on the edge of this thing. I'm not trying to make your job more difficult; I'm trying to make it more feasible to get to an end state that works. The end state needs to be mitigated at the river's edge, whether that edge is where it is now or is reconstructed at the end of the process in a different location because you've built out into the river for 10 years.

There's been a bad history of mitigation commitments that have been made and not fulfilled on projects. There were a lot of commitments made with the Big Dig, that were made in good faith and written into environmental documents, that ended up not happening at the end of the day. We don't want that to happen here. So the safest thing to do, I think, is to figure out the riverbank you want and build it at the front end of the project, and admit that what you're putting in isn't temporary, as it will have been part of the riverscape for 10 years. So, you might as well build it at the beginning, leave it there for 10 years and then get a good park out of it with a great rivers edge at the end. I'd ask you to consider that, as we're all better off if we can get something built at the front end that we all know and can agree on, and that could allow you to have enough room to stage the project. If it has to be more intrusive to accommodate two

tracks, then it has to be more intrusive. We can't say one environmental impact trumps the others. We have to have a process that respects all of the impacts, including the transportation impacts. Also, the maintenance and accessibility of the whole park has to be considered too.

Two more things, sorry if I'm going too long. First, I really do encourage you to explore what Tom Nally said. I think you can find the space for the two tracks without a much further impact on the river if you look at a different sequence. I suspect you also need to relax two other issues that are constraining you. One is the railyard that was never environmentally analyzed. No matter what it says in the South Station Environmental Impact Statement that the railyard in Allston was going to be evaluated as part of this EIR, that has not happened. There has never been a comparison of having it here or not, and it's been an awful constraint on your work, I believe, for too long, so relaxing that assumption, I suspect, would give you the ability to better deliver the two tracks within the space you have. So, I think we need to give you more elbow room. There's never been a layover facility here and there doesn't have to be. Run the trains in the middle of the day. This is a tail that has wagged the dog for way too long.

C: Jim Keller: I don't think that has much bearing on staging, but I understand your point.

C: Fred Salvucci: It's not your fault, it has never been subject to an alternatives analysis that was promised as part of the South Station EIS. Relaxing that constraint, I think will give us a more reasonable outcome for the people of MetroWest and in this area.

C: Jim Keller: Mark can chime in, but I don't think that alignment has really much bearing at all on this. ⁵

A: Fred Salvucci: I think it does.

C: Jim Keller: On staging I mean.

C: Fred Salvucci: The presumption that you need interlocking to the East and West, and why on Earth would you need an elevated track that is 6 feet higher than it is now when we're trying to achieve a better connectivity at Agganis Way.

A: Jim Keller: So, we brought down the profile since the last Task Force meeting. It's not all the way down because you have to have enough clearance, but that is not driving this.

⁵ The proposed rail layover facility is outside of the throat area in its entirety.

C: Fred Salvucci: I suspect it is.

A: Jim Keller: You can't demolish the viaduct if you have two tracks the whole time. You have to move the tracks away from the viaduct in order to demolish it. The real crux is figuring out how to demolish the viaduct.

C: Fred Salvucci: I think if you look at the sequence Tom mentioned, and if you were free of the rail yard constraint, or if at the very least it was the last thing that gets built, you'd have more flexibility.

A: Jim Keller: We've already started to look at what Tom had mentioned before we even went down the road of the schematics we showed tonight, but because of all of the work that has to happen along Boston University, along retaining walls, and because of where everything has to go in the final condition, it makes the most sense to try to demolish the viaduct and put things in their final location as soon as you can. You can't do any of the things we showed in the space in the middle while also demolishing the viaduct. All of the constraints brought us to where we are tonight.

C: Fred Salvucci: Just to explore this, we should do an interactive process because a lot of us have considered this. My last point is, this is a Design/Build job, so after the state process and after the federal process, somewhere around the 25% design this is then going to go to a different set of engineers and the builders, and the risk of slippage, the risk that some environmental mitigation commitments will get lost in the process, is very high. Again, that's why I'm suggesting building the mitigation at the front end so that it doesn't change. And you know that if you have 15 ways to build something, the Design/Builder will have a 16th way to do it. What is essential, and it's what you have here, is the proof that there is a way to build it. Then if there are more ways to do it, that's great, but you don't want that process to upend the environmental commitments, and the safest way to ensure that doesn't happen is to figure it out at the front end.

C: Ed Ionata: Thanks Fred. Folks, we're going to have to close this up in a couple minutes, so we can take one or two more questions.

Q: Harry Mattison: Can you update the task force agenda for the next several months?

A: Ed Ionata: Yes, in fact I was going to turn it over to Nate to talk about the next month's agenda and when the meeting is.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: I'm not exactly sure off the top of my head what the agenda is, but the next meeting is one month from tonight on a Thursday.

C: Mike O'Dowd: As for the agenda, one of the things we wanted to do tonight was get into more details about staging, and show you all of the cross sections, so we'll go over that at the next meeting. We also want to develop a schedule to show you how the MEPA and NEPA processes will be coordinated and progressed through on the same timeframe. I believe also in the original distribution regarding the agenda for May we wanted to discuss permitting. So those are the three things we'll talk about next month.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Since we're going to a Thursday, May 23rd, I'll send a reminder note so people mark their calendars.⁶

C: Jessica Robertson: At the next meeting, if we're going to continue to talk about construction phasing, it would be great if we could see an option that has two Worcester line tracks, and some option that has some form of a Paul Dudley White Path.

A: Mike O'Dowd: We can do that.

Q: Harry Mattison: The six-month schedule of Task Force meetings you had sent out in January was very helpful. Since we're almost at the end of that, can you update that?

A: Mike O'Dowd: Yes, we can do that.

C: Ed Ionata: Thank you all for coming tonight.

Next Steps

The next Task Force meeting will take place on May 23, 2019.

⁶ This reminder note was transmitted on April 25th.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Batchelor	George	MassDOT
Beggan	Joe	Harvard University
Berkowitz	Glen	A Better City
Cabral Curtis	Nathaniel	Howard Stein Hudson
Cerbone	Jim	MassDOT
Conboy	Darren	Jacobs
Connaughton	Mary	Pioneer Institute
Dailey	Donny	MassDOT
Deignan	Bill	City of Cambridge
Desrosier	Jason	Allston/Brighton CDC
Driessen	Guus	Town of Brookline
Ionata	Ed	Tetra Tech
Jasinski	Laura	Charles River Conservancy
Johnson	Doug	Howard Stein Hudson
Kaiser	Steve	
Keller	Jim	Tetra Tech
Landman	Wendy	WalkBoston
Lenox	Rich	WSP
Loutzenheiser	David	MAPC
Mande	Pallavi	Charles River Watershed Association
Mattison	Harry	Allston Resident
Miller	Ken	FHWA
Moll	Anna	Skanska
Mook	Galen	Allston Resident
Nally	Tom	A Better City

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
O'Dowd	Mike	MassDOT
Ostrander	Cassie	FHWA
Read	Tad	Boston Planning and Development Agency
Robertson	Jessica	Allston Resident
Salvucci	Fred	
Silveira	Steve	ML Strategies
Toni	Melissa	FHWA
Wofford	Jack	

Appendix 2: Environmental Permitting Flowchart

