

6 Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

6.1 Introduction

This section discusses agency coordination and public involvement conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) in the development of this [Final](#) Environmental Impact Statement ([FEIS](#)). **Appendix 6.1, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Technical Report**, provides further details.

6.2 Agency Coordination

6.2.1 Lead Agencies

FHWA, as Lead Federal Agency, and MassDOT, as Joint Lead Agency, are responsible for providing an opportunity for agency and public involvement in the Cape Cod Bridges Program's (Program) environmental review process.¹ FHWA and MassDOT prepared an Agency Coordination Plan to solicit and consider input from other agencies and the public in the environmental review process for the Program in accordance with 23 United States Code (USC) 139. The Program's Agency Coordination Plan is in effect throughout the environmental review process and is regularly updated to reflect ongoing agency involvement, completion of key milestones, and changes to agency contacts and roles, as necessary.

6.2.2 Cooperating Agencies

In April 2023, FHWA invited federal and state agencies with jurisdiction by law (via permitting or other regulatory authority) to serve as Cooperating Agencies in the environmental review process for the Program. Cooperating Agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as practicable, any issues that could substantially delay or prevent the granting of a permit or other approval needed for the Program and participating in resolving issues as needed. **Table 6-1** lists the federal and state agencies that are currently serving as Cooperating Agencies, including their applicable area(s) of jurisdiction.

¹ Per 23 United States Code (USC) § 139(a)(5), the term "environmental review process" means (1) the process for preparing for a project an environmental impact statement, environmental assessment, categorical exclusion, or other document prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and (2) the process and schedule, including a timetable for and completion of any environmental permit, approval, review, or study required for a project under any federal law other than the NEPA.

Table 6-1. Cape Cod Bridges Program Cooperating Agencies and Areas of Jurisdiction

Cooperating Agency	Areas of Jurisdiction
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – New England District	• Issues permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 United States Code [USC] 1344), including Section 404(b)(1), and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (33 USC 403) for discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, and for structures in navigable waters of the United States. • Issues Section 408 permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 408) for occupation and alteration of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers federally authorized Civil Works Project. • Issues a federal permit under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act for archaeological investigation on land within the boundaries of the Cape Cod Canal Federal Navigation Project, pursuant to 43 Code of Federal Regulations.
U.S. Coast Guard – First District	• Issues bridge permits under The General Bridge Act of 1946 (33 USC 525) for construction of new bridges across navigable waters of the United States.
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – New England Regional Office	• Issues a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit for discharge of stormwater from construction sites that disturb 1 acre or more of land under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1342). • Reviews the Section 404 permit under Section 401 (a)(2) of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341(2)(2)). • Reviews the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7609).
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)/Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office	• Consultation for effects to marine species under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1536), the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 USC 1371), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 USC 661). • Consultation for effects to Essential Fish Habitat under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 USC 1801-1891d).
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	• Consultation for effects to terrestrial species under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1536) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 USC 661).
Massachusetts Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)	• Consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 USC 306108), including development and execution of a Programmatic Agreement.

Cooperating Agency	Areas of Jurisdiction
Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	Issues Secretary Certificates on the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Reports under Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (301 Code of Massachusetts Regulations [CMR] 11.00).
Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game	Issues a Conservation and Management Permit under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (321 CMR 10.00), if needed.
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Issues 401 Water Quality Certification under 314 CMR 9.00.
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	Issues Federal Consistency Determination under the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 USC 1451-1464)

In addition to their permit and approval responsibilities identified in [Table 6-1](#), the Cooperating Agencies played a key role in Program planning and environmental review. As illustrated in [Table 6-2](#), FHWA and MassDOT hosted a series of meetings with Cooperating Agencies between June 2023 and [April 2026](#) to discuss the status of the Program and ensure timely participation and concurrence from the Cooperating Agencies at important checkpoints in the environmental review process, including the Program purpose and need, alternatives to be carried forward in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), permitting schedule, impact assessment methodologies, preferred alternative, preliminary mitigation measures, [and review of the Draft FEIS.](#)

Table 6-2. Cooperating Agency Meeting Summary

Date	Meeting Agenda
June 14, 2023	Provide information on the Program background, general Study Areas, existing environmental constraints, bridge and roadway design development, and applicable regulatory approvals.
October 17, 2023	Provide a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) update, review roles and responsibilities for Cooperating Agencies in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, review the Program's Purpose and Need Statement, present the alternatives analysis, and outline next steps in the NEPA process, including obtaining Cooperating Agencies' concurrence on the Program's Purpose and Need Statement, which was completed on October 17, 2023.
March 29, 2024	Overview of Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the Program and NOI Supplemental Document published in the Federal Register on February 29, 2024; review of the alternatives analysis process; review of Draft Permitting Timetable; and outline of next steps in the NEPA process. Concurrence from Cooperating Agencies on alternatives to be carried forward for evaluation in the Draft EIS (DEIS), which was completed on May 16, 2024.

Date	Meeting Agenda
June 27, 2024	Provide Program updates and an overview of the Agency Coordination Plan and EIS Assessment Methodologies Report, which were distributed to Cooperating Agencies before the meeting. On July 27, 2024, the Cooperating Agencies concurred with the Program's EIS Assessment Methodologies Report. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provided the Cooperating Agencies an updated EIS Assessment Methodologies report on December 2, 2024.
December 4, 2024	Provide Program updates on funding and NEPA; present an assessment of highway interchange options relative to Program needs, including goals and related objectives; and identify recommended highway interchange approach options at each crossing to be retained for detailed study in the DEIS.
March 7, 2025	Provide Program updates, identify sections of the DEIS applicable to each Cooperating Agency for review, and outline next steps in the NEPA process, including submitting jurisdictional-specific sections of the Preliminary DEIS to Cooperating Agencies on March 14, 2025, for a 30-day review. Concurrence from Cooperating Agencies on the Preferred Alternative and Preliminary Mitigation was completed on April 14, 2025.
April 8, 2026	Provide Program updates, identify sections of the Draft FEIS applicable to each Cooperating Agency for review, and outline next steps in the NEPA process, including the ongoing Cooperating Agency review of the preliminary Draft FEIS/ROD through April 12, 2026. Discussion emphasized ensuring environmental commitments are fully captured in the FEIS and maintaining coordination on issues such as recreational access and document consistency. Cooperating Agencies were asked to submit comments by April 12, 2026.

FHWA and MassDOT conducted agency consultation concurrently with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process under the following regulations:

- **Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966** requires federal agencies to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, federally recognized Native American Tribes, and other consulting parties when undertaking projects that may affect historic properties. **Section 4.16, Cultural Resources**, and **Appendix 4.16, Cultural Resources Technical Report**, provide details on the Program's Section 106 consultation process.
- **Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966** requires coordination with the public and officials with jurisdiction for the potential transportation use of properties protected under this Act, including publicly owned public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife or waterfowl refuges, or any publicly or privately owned historic site listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. **Chapter 5, Final Section 4(f) Evaluation**, provides information on coordination with applicable officials with jurisdiction over historic properties, parklands, and recreation areas subject to transportation use by the Build Alternative.
- **Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act** requires that for actions authorized, funded, or carried out by a federal agency, that the agency shall, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA

Fisheries), ensure that the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat of the endangered or threatened species. **Appendix 4.11, Threatened, Endangered, and Protected Species and Habitats Material**, documents completion of Program consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

- **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act** requires federal agencies to consult with NOAA Fisheries when activities they authorize, fund, or undertake, or propose to authorize, fund, or undertake, may adversely affect designated Essential Fish Habitat. **Appendix 4.11, Threatened, Endangered, and Protected Species and Habitats Material**, documents completion of Program consultation with NOAA Fisheries in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
- **Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act** requires federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, and the appropriate state wildlife agency before undertaking or permitting any activities that modify or control waters in the United States. **Appendix 4.11, Threatened, Endangered, and Protected Species and Habitats Material**, documents completion of Program consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries in compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.
- **Marine Mammal Protection Act** prohibits the take or attempted take of any marine mammal species in U.S. waters. MassDOT has developed a Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Monitoring and Mitigation Plan, which incorporates monitoring protocols, operational procedures, and best management practices to avoid and minimize potential effects on marine mammals. Based upon the proposed avoidance and conservation measures and in response to consultation with NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources, MassDOT has determined that it would not be necessary to pursue a take authorization under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

6.3 Public Involvement

6.3.1 Public Involvement Plan

MassDOT developed a comprehensive Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to guide the outreach and engagement process for the Program. This robust document details the process of engaging and informing the public and the comprehensive, inclusive, and effective strategies used to solicit feedback from key stakeholders and the local communities to successfully implement the Program.

MassDOT developed the PIP at the onset of the Program in January 2021, initially sharing it with stakeholders (including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE]) for comments and input to align expectations on public involvement. The PIP is a living document that is continuously updated to provide the most current information on the public outreach program. The PIP is posted online on the Program website to promote transparency and provide the public with information on outreach activities and strategies.

6.3.2 Communication Tools and Resources

MassDOT uses the communication tools and resources listed in the following sections to inform the public about the Program and to gather feedback.

6.3.2.1 Program Website

MassDOT developed the [Program website](#)² to provide a centralized, easily navigable location for the public to access online resources and up-to-date information on the Program. The website has been heavily used and has seen a high number of visitors. As of [January 1, 2026](#), the website has been visited over [85,000](#) times by over [55,000](#) different users.

6.3.2.2 Stakeholder Database

MassDOT developed a comprehensive stakeholder database to disseminate Program information, including notifications of meetings. The stakeholder database has grown throughout the Program's development, as stakeholders who subscribe to updates, submit comments, and attend virtual or in-person meetings have their contact information entered into the Program database. MassDOT manages and updates the database through the Public Involvement Management Application (PIMA), described in [Section 6.3.2.3](#). As of [January 1, 2026](#), the database included over [6,200](#) stakeholders.

6.3.2.3 Public Involvement Management Application

Throughout the Program, MassDOT has used its PIMA as a central database of stakeholders and comments to ensure continuous engagement with the public. PIMA contains tools and benefits that help the public more easily comment and provide feedback, and it allows the Program to manage and track engagement.

PIMA provides an online comment form ([Exhibit 6-1](#)) that is linked to the Program website and is included on other materials such as emails, flyers, and social media posts. This comment form is customizable and allows the public to provide input and feedback on key topics and priorities, identify areas of concern on a map, rate their opinions of the Program, and subscribe for Program updates.

PIMA provides a subscription link, which allows the public to sign up for updates without submitting a comment. PIMA also serves as a central database of stakeholders and helps ensure continuous

Exhibit 6-1. PIMA Comment Form

Cape Cod Bridges Program
MassDOT's Cape Cod Bridges Program will be a continuation of the Cape Cod Canal Transportation Study, focusing on upgrades and improvements to the Canal area transportation networks.

1) Please enter your comment below: * Required
Please do not place any personally identifiable information such as names, phone numbers, or email addresses within this field and be aware that any comment you place in this field will be available for public consumption.

Please do not place any personally identifiable information (name, phone, or email) within your comment.

2) Select any of the following topics that apply to your comment: (Select up to 3)

3) Tell us about yourself and stay up to date with the project
Zip Code * Required Last Name * Required Email * Required

4) Do you have a specific question or concern that you would like a response to?

➔

² <https://www.mass.gov/cape-cod-bridges-program>

engagement of individuals and entities. This database has grown as individuals are added by MassDOT, submit a comment or question, or sign up for updates through the subscription link.

6.3.2.4 Email Blasts

MassDOT regularly sends email blasts through PIMA to stakeholders and interested parties on a variety of topics and events. These email communications serve to distribute Program updates, public meeting notifications, details on upcoming outreach activities, and other information and content regarding the Program.

6.3.2.5 Frequently Asked Questions

MassDOT has developed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents to help convey details and technical information to the public. These documents have included a wide variety of commonly asked questions and concerns, such as questions regarding Program status, schedule, cost, current activities, scope, and benefits. Commonly asked questions were sourced from numerous avenues, including meetings, briefings, and the online comment form. These FAQ documents have been distributed via email to the stakeholder database and printed and distributed at in-person events.

6.3.2.6 Social Media

MassDOT uses its social media accounts to disseminate messaging relating to the Program milestones, public involvement opportunities, upcoming public meetings, and schedule updates. As of [January 1, 2026](#), MassDOT has posted at least [70](#) separate times on its social media platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Instagram. These social media posts have received nearly [1,800](#) separate interactions and have been reshared nearly [180](#) times, helping to further amplify the Program's messages and spread awareness.

6.3.2.7 Flyers

MassDOT uses flyers to disseminate information and solicit information. Flyers are developed for each public meeting and open house, as well as for general updates and information on the Program. As a matter of course, flyers are translated to Spanish and Portuguese.

6.3.2.8 Press Releases

MassDOT distributes press releases to local, state, and regional outlets to announce details regarding Program updates, milestones, public events, and notable developments.

6.3.2.9 Surveys

MassDOT has developed online surveys to solicit feedback from the public on specific aspects of the Program. For example, MassDOT shared an online survey during the Round 3 public information meetings (described in [Section 6.3.3.4](#)) to assess the public's preferences for the proposed bridge types. Surveys have also been used during public meetings to determine the usage of interpretation services.

6.3.2.10 Formal Notices

MassDOT issues formal notices to provide official notification to the public of Program events, including all public meetings, open houses, and public hearings. The formal notices are posted online on the MassDOT website in an accessible format and included on the MassDOT event page. Additionally, these formal notices are advertised in English and non-English languages in numerous print and digital publications, including the following:

- Cape Cod Times
- Cape Cod Chronicle
- Bourne Enterprise
- El Planeta
- Portuguese Times
- Barnstable Patriot
- Provincetown Independent

These publications have a reported total circulation of nearly 220,000 readers.

6.3.2.11 Phone Calls

In addition to responding to stakeholder phone call inquiries, MassDOT has utilized phone calls to coordinate various events, stakeholder meetings, and briefings. Coordination calls also have been held with local community organizations and stakeholders as part of the effort to verify demographic data.

6.3.3 Public Participation Program

6.3.3.1 Advisory Group Meetings

MassDOT has established an Advisory Group to allow for increased engagement with key stakeholders and learn of community feedback, needs, and concerns in a focused setting. Advisory Group members represent a variety of stakeholder types, including, but not limited to the following:

- Local and elected officials
- Planning commissions
- Emergency services representatives
- Economic development representatives
- Chambers of commerce

Feedback, concerns, and questions brought up during Advisory Group discussions are used by MassDOT to help make informed decisions throughout Program development.

Advisory Group meetings are open to the public, and meeting materials, including presentations and meeting notes are made available on the Program website. As of [January 1, 2026](#), MassDOT has hosted

[eight](#) Advisory Group meetings—May 2023, September 2023 ([Exhibit 6-2](#)), April 2024 ([Exhibit 6-3](#)), October 2024, March 2025, [June 2025](#), [October 2025](#), and [December 2025](#).

6.3.3.2 Stakeholder Briefings

MassDOT conducts regular briefings with local and regional stakeholders to anticipate priorities of the broader public, address stakeholder needs and concerns and support a collaborative Program development process. Stakeholder briefings have taken a variety of forms, including virtual online meetings, in-person briefings, and attendance at existing meetings and events. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to the following:

- Town of Bourne
- Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce
- Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce
- Cape Cod Commission
- Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority
- Federal, State, and Local Elected Officials
- Market Basket
- Military-Civilian Community Council for Joint Base Cape Cod
- Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission
- Old Colony Planning Council
- Sandwich Chamber of Commerce
- Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development Commission
- Southeastern Regional Transit Authority
- The Steamship Authority

6.3.3.3 Public Meetings

MassDOT regularly holds public [meetings](#)—including virtual meetings, [public hearings](#), and open houses—to provide updates and the latest available information, highlight key milestones, and allow the public to provide input and feedback on various aspects of the Program.

MassDOT has an extensive outreach program for each public meeting. Invites and notification materials have been posted and distributed at least two weeks before each [event](#) and have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Notification materials have included formal notices posted

Exhibit 6-2. Advisory Group Meeting (September 26, 2023)



Exhibit 6-3. Advisory Group Meeting (April 9, 2024)



online on the MassDOT website and in newspapers, flyers, email blasts, social media posts, press releases, and other email updates.

Spanish, Portuguese, and American Sign Language interpreters have been available at every public [meeting](#), as well as Communication Access Realtime Translation providers. Notification materials also contain information on additional language interpretation and translation services.

Virtual Public Meetings

As of [January 1, 2026](#), MassDOT has held 11 [virtual](#) public meetings, which have been attended by a cumulative total of 4,560 individuals. Each of these meetings has been held virtually via Zoom and has consisted of a formal presentation by MassDOT followed by an opportunity for public questions and comments.

Meeting presentations and summaries are posted on the Program’s website in an accessible format. Additionally, the meeting recordings are posted on the Program website and integrated with PIMA, so that users can seamlessly view the recording and submit comments.

Open Houses

As of [January 1, 2026](#), MassDOT has held [five](#) open houses and will continue to use these types of events to engage with the public. A cumulative total of at least [1,596](#) registered individuals attended the [five](#) open houses. Each of these events has been held in Bourne, in-person, and in an accessible location. They have taken place during weekdays, [during the afternoon and evening hours](#). Each event has included numerous components—such as graphical displays and pictures, interactive stations, and copies of printed materials, such as FAQs and relevant documents, videos, and renderings. Additionally, the presentations and graphics used for each meeting have been posted on the Program’s website in an accessible format. [Section 6.3.3.4](#) provides additional details on the open houses.

Public Hearings

[As of January 1, 2026, MassDOT has held one public hearing, which was attended by a total of 60 individuals. This event was held in Bourne, in-person, in an accessible location. It occurred during the evening hours on a weekday. In addition to a presentation, this event featured an opportunity for public comment, as well as graphical displays and renderings, printed materials, and comment cards. The presentation and transcript from the public hearing were posted on the Program’s website in an accessible format.](#)

6.3.3.4 Rounds of Public Outreach

To promote effective engagement, MassDOT organized public outreach into rounds. As of January 1, 2026, MassDOT has held nine rounds of public outreach. Each round took place over several weeks or even months, and were intended to share specific information and updates, solicit feedback and questions, and incorporate input into the Program. Each round included events such as virtual public meetings, open houses, [or a public hearing](#), and MassDOT posted [accessible materials from each event](#) on its website.

Each round of public outreach also included stakeholder briefings and/or Advisory Group meetings, as described in [Section 6.3.3.1](#) and [Section 6.3.3.2](#).

MassDOT plans to continue the rounds of public outreach throughout the duration of the Program.

Each round afforded the public with opportunities to provide feedback, either through written or verbal opportunities at public meetings or open houses, or through written comments submitted online or at events. All verbal comments were answered in real time, as were written comments submitted at virtual public events. MassDOT provided written responses to all other comments, considered this feedback in Program design, and incorporated this input into FAQs.

Round 1 – Spring/Summer 2021

The first round of public outreach for the Program took place in summer 2021. Round 1 consisted of two live, identical virtual public information meetings on June 29 and June 30, 2021. Round 1 introduced the Program to the public and provided general information on current activities and next steps. The information conveyed during this round included the history of the Program, introduced MassDOT, the need for the Program, the status of Program development, including data collection and analysis, and the public involvement process. A combined total of 686 individuals attended these two public meetings. Approximately 300 comments were submitted verbally or in written form. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA.

Round 2 – Fall 2021

The second round of public outreach for the Program took place in fall 2021. Round 2 consisted of two live, identical virtual public information meetings on November 16 and November 18, 2021. Round 2 provided an update on the progress of the Program and solicited input on several components. The information conveyed included details on current activities, existing conditions, Measures of Effectiveness, and input on a Purpose and Need Statement. During the meetings, polls were conducted regarding meeting notifications, travel over the bridges, and priorities for improvements. A combined total of 565 individuals attended these two public meetings. Approximately 184 comments were submitted verbally or in written form. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA.

Round 3 – Fall 2022

The third round of public outreach for the Program took place in fall 2022. Round 3 consisted of two live, identical virtual public information meetings on November 15 and November 17, 2022. Round 3 shared information on the status of the Program and attempted to gain public concurrence on key aspects and developments. The information conveyed and shared for public input included the draft Purpose and Need Statement, bridge types, public and stakeholder engagement, funding, and construction staging. Round 3 included an online survey where the public was asked to rate the proposed bridge types and to rate their views of and preferences for the replacement bridges via two questions:

- How important is it that the new Cape Cod Bridges resemble the current Bourne and Sagamore Bridges?
- How important is it to replace the Cape Cod Bridges with landmark structures? (Figure 6-1)

A combined total of 1,257 individuals attended these two public meetings.

Approximately 367 comments were submitted verbally or in written form. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA. Additionally, at the close of the survey, MassDOT recorded 2,201 responses to the survey questions.

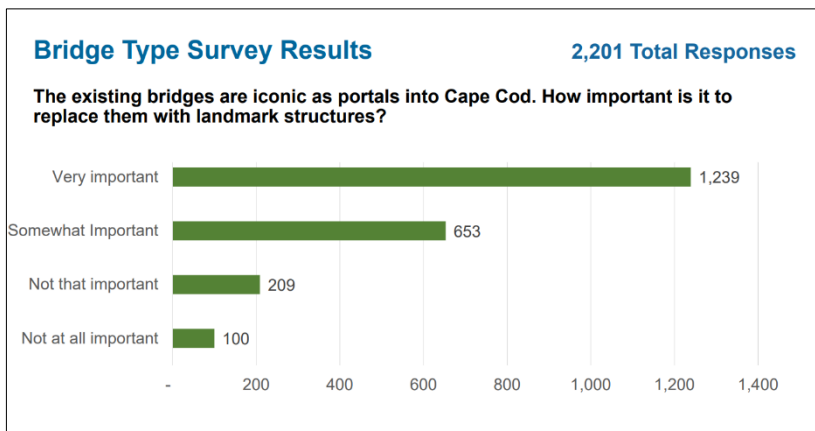
Round 4 – Winter 2022/2023

The fourth round of public outreach for the Program took place in winter 2022/2023. Round 4 consisted of two live, identical virtual public information meetings on January 24 and January 26, 2023. Round 4 provided updates on the status of the Program, including the Purpose and Need Statement, and shared results of public surveys and questions. The information conveyed during this round included reviewing the status of funding, the Program’s purpose and need, public feedback on bridge types, proposed lane configurations, and roadway grades and locations. A combined total of 991 individuals attended these two public meetings. Approximately 361 comments were submitted verbally or in written form. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA.

Round 5 – Spring 2023

The fifth round of public outreach for the Program took place in spring 2023. Round 5 reviewed the proposed interchange approach connections. The first live, virtual public meeting (March 22, 2023) provided an update and information on the Bourne Bridge roadway connection alternatives. The second live, virtual public meeting (March 29, 2023) provided an update and information on the Sagamore Bridge roadway connection alternatives. A combined total of 694 individuals attended these

Figure 6-1. Round 3 Bridge Type Survey Results



two public meetings. Approximately 125 comments were submitted verbally or in written form. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA.

Additionally, Round 5 included an open house (May 17, 2023, at the Bourne Veteran's Memorial Community Center in Bourne) with 530 individuals attending.

The open house included displays and graphics regarding roadway approaches, bridge alignments, bridge type, rail trail connections, roadway grades, lane configurations, and construction staging. The event also served to announce the filing of the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act. Through the open house, approximately 40 comments were submitted to MassDOT.

Round 6 – Spring 2024

The sixth round of public outreach for the Program took place in spring 2024. Round 6 reviewed MassDOT's assessment of highway interchange options, reviewed the status of Program funding updates, and presented the Program's NEPA updates. The live, virtual public information meeting on April 25, 2024, was attended by 367 individuals. Approximately 42 comments were submitted verbally or in written form. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA.

Round 6 also included an open house (May 13, 2024, at the Bourne Veteran's Memorial Community Center), which 283 individuals attended. The open house included displays and graphics regarding interchange options, construction concepts, lane configurations, roadway grade, pedestrian amenities, and bridge type. This event also provided opportunities for public review and comment as part of NEPA scoping for the DEIS. Through the open house, approximately 37 comments were submitted to MassDOT. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA.

Round 7 – Fall 2024

The seventh round of public outreach for the Program took place in fall 2024. Round 7 provided an update on Program funding, the detailed assessment of interchange options, recommended interchange options, and subsurface explorations.

Round 7 included an open house event (November 18, 2024, at the Bourne Veteran's Memorial Community Center), which 453 individuals attended. The open house included graphics and displays showing interchange options, bridge design, construction concepts, subsurface exploration, and lane configurations.

The open house also provided opportunities for public review and comment.

Through this event, approximately 55 comments were submitted to MassDOT. Comments were responded to, considered by MassDOT in Program design, and logged in PIMA.

Round 8 – Fall 2025

The eighth round of public outreach for the Program took place in fall 2025. Round 8 provided opportunities for review and public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), as well as updates on the Program's status, design development, and current activities.

Round 8 included an in-person open house (September 25, 2025, at the Bourne Veteran's Memorial Community Center in Bourne), which was attended by 170 individuals. This open house included displays and graphics regarding the DEIR's findings and information on roadway approaches, bridge design, Program status, current schedule, and next steps.

The event featured printed materials, physical and digital copies of the DEIR, public comment forms, and pre-addressed envelopes for attendees to submit written comments to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office.

Round 9 – Winter 2025

The ninth round of public outreach for the Program took place in winter 2025/2026. Round 9 provided opportunities for review and public comment on the DEIS, Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act regarding the "direct use" of parks and recreation properties, as well as updates on the Program's status, design development, wayfinding and interpretative signage, and current activities.

The public hearing (December 16, 2025, at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in the town of Bourne) was attended by 60 individuals and served to provide the public with an opportunity to review the DEIS's findings and submit verbal and written comments and feedback. Through this event, approximately 18 comments were submitted to MassDOT. **Section 6.6.2** provides additional information on this public hearing.

The open house (January 20, 2026, at the Bournedale Elementary School in the town of Bourne) was attended by 160 individuals. This open house included displays and graphics regarding Section 4(f) and the direct use of parks and recreation properties, as well as information on wayfinding, interpretative signage, bridge design, Program's status, current schedule, and next steps. Through this event, approximately nine comments were submitted to the Program. Comments addressed topics such as interpretive signage, parks and recreation impacts and mitigation, and right-of-way.

6.4 Incorporating Feedback

Public input has been considered by MassDOT throughout the Program to promote informed decision making and ensure the scope, design, and other aspects incorporate community and stakeholder feedback.

Specific examples of components of the Program that have been incorporated into the design based on stakeholder and public engagement include:

- Selecting the network tied-arch bridge type and identifying areas of interest for bridge design, such as bridge aesthetics and similarity to the existing structures.
- Confirming MassDOT's recommended option for each of the four highway interchange quadrants.

- Developing the purpose and need evaluation criteria for separating local and regional traffic.
- Connecting the Claire Saltonstall Bikeway to the Program bicycle facilities on State Road in the Sagamore North Quadrant.
- Updating the design of Frontage Road to accommodate bi-directional traffic.
- [Extending the shared-use path along Sandwich Road to Gallo Ice Arena.](#)
- [Retaining the shared-use path connection through Keith Field as a permanent facility.](#)
- [Expanding the gravel parking overflow area along Canal Street.](#)
- [Making roadway entrance and exit improvements at Gallo Ice Arena.](#)
- [Making roadway entrance and exit improvements at Bourne Scenic Park.](#)
- [Providing new amenities within Bourne Scenic Park.](#)

6.5 Agency and Public Scoping Activities

This section describes the agency and public scoping process for identifying the issues for analysis in the Program’s DEIS.

6.5.1 National Environmental Policy Act: Review and Scoping for Draft Environmental Impact Statement

In coordination with MassDOT, FHWA published an NOI to prepare an EIS for the Program in the Federal Register on February 29, 2024 (Docket No. FHWA-2024-0014). The published NOI was accompanied by a Supplementary NOI document, which provided additional information on the Program’s Purpose and Need Statement; alternatives the DEIS will consider; expected impacts on the human, natural, and built environments; and a proposed high-level schedule for the decision-making process. The purpose of the NOI was to advise the public, agencies, and stakeholders of the Program and to solicit comments on the scope of the Program’s EIS. The publication of the NOI in the Federal Register on February 29, 2024, started the NEPA scoping process for the Program.

6.5.1.1 Public Meeting and Open House

FHWA and MassDOT provided opportunities for public review of the NOI through a virtual public meeting, an open house, and an extended comment period through May 31, 2024.

As presented in [**Section 6.3.3.4**](#) (Round 6), MassDOT conducted a virtual public meeting on April 25, 2024. In total, 367 members of the public attended the meeting. In addition to providing an update on the Program’s funding status, MassDOT provided a NEPA update and reviewed the NOI documents. MassDOT addressed 42 comments from 30 individuals during the meeting.

MassDOT conducted an open house at the Bourne Veteran’s Memorial Community Center on May 13, 2024, which was attended by 283 members of the public. In addition to providing comment boxes, MassDOT conducted an interactive survey with open house attendees regarding usage of the bridges, needs, priorities, and goals.

6.5.1.2 Comment Period

The public provided comments on the Program through the virtual public meeting, open house, Program website, and email correspondence to FHWA and MassDOT. In total, 89 individuals provided comments on the NOI. Refer to **Appendix 6.2, Responses to Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Comments**, which reiterates the comments received during the NEPA review process and provides a response according to common themes or the topic of the comment.

6.6 Agency and Public Review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

6.6.1 Issuance of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Public Comment Period

FHWA is responsible for filing the DEIS with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register, which establishes a period of not fewer than 45 days nor more than 60 days for comments on the DEIS. [The Notice of Availability for the DEIS was published in the Federal Register on November 21, 2025 \(90 FR 52660\), and public comments on the DEIS were accepted for 45 days following publication of the Notice of Availability.](#)

[The DEIS was posted online through an interactive summary site, which allowed the public to review and explore highlights and key findings of the DEIS, and submit comments in an interactive format. The DEIS interactive summary site received 2,232 views during the public comment period. The DEIS was also posted on the MassDOT website in PDF format. The webpage hosting the PDFs received 1,374 views during the public comment period.](#)

[Refer to **Appendix 6.3, Responses to Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comments**, for comments received on the DEIS and MassDOT's responses.](#)

Cooperating Agencies are required to provide comments on the DEIS on issues within their jurisdiction, expertise, or authority. Cooperating Agencies are also required to specify any additional information they need to meet the requirements for federal permits or other approvals. If a Cooperating Agency has remaining concerns, then it must specify mitigation measures that would allow the Program to be approved. [USACE and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) submitted multiple comments on the DEIS. Key feedback from USACE focused on Section 4\(f\), proposed easements, and distribution of the DEIS. The EPA's feedback centered on stormwater management and prompting additional coordination with the agency. Additionally, EPA requested that MassDOT conduct a quantitative analysis of projected emission increases during construction. In response, MassDOT estimated annual combined construction-related emissions from diesel truck trips and marine vessel activity, which are well below EPA *de minimis* emission threshold rates for criteria pollutants. Refer to **Section 4.13, Air Quality** for details on the analysis and its comparison to applicable EPA thresholds.](#)

6.6.2 Public Meetings and Hearings

In accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations 771.111(h)(2)(iii), MassDOT is responsible for conducting a DEIS public hearing in coordination with FHWA.

As presented in **Section 6.3.3.4** (Round 9), the DEIS public hearing took place on December 16, 2025, and was attended by approximately 60 individuals. This public hearing took place at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Bourne and began at 6 p.m.

The event featured printed materials, physical copies of the DEIS, public comment forms, renderings of the bridge design and roadway approaches, and displays regarding how to view the DEIS online and submit comments.

Following the formal presentation, there were opportunities for public comments and questions. Approximately 18 verbal comments were submitted from nine individuals. Comments and questions were primarily related to topics such as multimodal accommodations and right-of-way. The presentation and transcript from the public hearing were posted online.