

# I-90 ALLSTON MULTIMODAL PROJECT

## Public Information Meeting

November 7, 2019 – Brighton High School, 25 Warren St. Brighton, MA



# Today's Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Scoping Report Overview**
  - Section 1: Introduction
  - Section 2: Purpose & Need
  - Section 3: Alternatives
  - Section 4: Environmental Analysis (Methods)
  - Section 5: Agency and Public Coordination
- **Questions and Comments**



## ***I-90 Allston Multimodal Project Boston, MA***

National Environmental Policy Act Review  
Scoping Report

November 6, 2019



# Meeting Overview

- This meeting is intended to introduce the Scoping Report to the public and respond to any questions or comments on process and timing.
- The Project Team recognizes that the public has not had time to review the document.
- Attendees are also welcome to provide questions or comments on the content of the Scoping Report.
- A second public meeting will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup> in Framingham.
- Responses to all substantive comments made during the scoping process will be provided to the public after conclusion of the scoping comment period. The scoping comment period closes December 12<sup>th</sup>.



# Ground Rules



- Please hold comments and questions until the end of the presentation.
- In order to be respectful of all attendees, each commenter will be limited to two minutes to present comment(s) and/or question(s). Additional comments can be submitted in writing at the email and mail addresses provided in the Scoping Report.
- We respectfully ask that Task Force members hold their comments and questions until the general public has had a chance to comment.

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# Scoping Report Overview: Introduction



- **Regulatory Framework**
  - What is NEPA?
  - What is the purpose of Scoping?
- **Project Background**
  - Project Area and Elements
  - Project History

# Regulatory Framework: What is NEPA?

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a Federal law that requires Federal agencies conduct environmental reviews to consider environmental effects of their actions.
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the Lead Federal Agency for this project.
- Council on Environmental Quality and FHWA Regulations specify NEPA procedures.
- NEPA Class of Action: Environmental Impact Statement





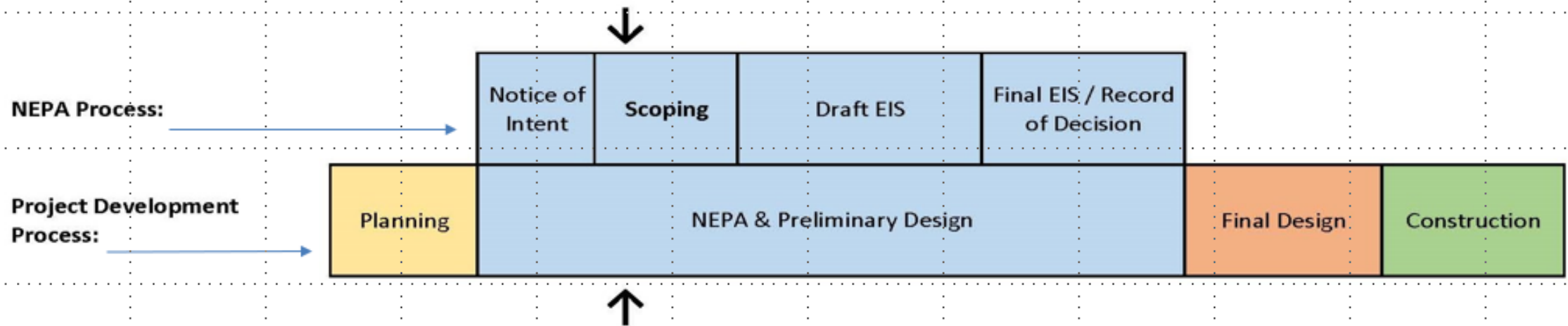
# NEPA Scoping Process Overview

- The Scoping Report was published November 6<sup>th</sup>, kicking off the Scoping Process and 37-day public comment period.
- The Scoping Process determines the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS and identifies significant issues related to the proposed action.
- The Scoping Process is the public's first opportunity to comment on the project during NEPA.
- A Scoping Report including Purpose & Need is prepared to outline central elements of the project for public and agency review.
- At the conclusion of the scoping process, a Scoping Summary Report will be prepared which will summarize and respond to substantive comments received during the public comment period.



# NEPA Scoping Process Overview

- Step 1: Prepare a Scoping Report and seek public and agency comment.
- Step 2: Review comments, summarize and respond to substantive comments and prepare a Scoping Summary Report.





# Project Area





# Project History



The following has occurred as part of the state environmental review process:

- Environmental Notification Form (October 2014)
- Boston Planning & Development Agency Placemaking Study (October 2016)
- Draft Environmental Impact Report (November 2017)
- Independent Review Team Report (October 2018)
- Task Force and Public Information Meetings ongoing

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# What is a NEPA Purpose & Need Statement?

- The lead agency has the authority and responsibility to define the Purpose and Need for purposes of the NEPA analysis.
- Under NEPA implementing regulations, the Purpose and Need:
  - Briefly specifies the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing alternatives.
  - Describes the existing transportation deficiencies within the project area that will be addressed by the project.
  - Answers the question “Why is this project needed?” Without establishing the transportation need, a project’s purpose cannot be justified.
  - Is the basis for the alternatives analysis and helps define a reasonable range of alternatives to analyze but should not discuss or propose alternatives. The P&N should not be so narrowly defined that it unreasonably points to or specifies a single solution.

# I-90 Allston Purpose & Need



- **Roadway Deficiencies**
  - I-90 Viaduct Condition
  - Substandard Highway Layout and Geometry
- **Safety**
  - Crash Rates, I-90 Mainline and Viaduct
  - Crash Rates, I-90 Interchange
- **Rail Limitations**
  - Commuter Rail Operations
  - Transit Demand and New Connections
  - Commuter Rail Layover





# I-90 Allston Purpose & Need (Continued)

- **Mobility Limitations and Transportation Access**
  - Interchange Ramps
  - Substandard Width (Paul Dudley White Path)
  - Access to the Charles River Reservation
  - Multimodal Transportation Access within the Project Area
- **Project Purpose:** Address roadway deficiencies and address safety issues of Interstate 90 mainline and Interstate I-90 interchange 18, 19, and 20 in Allston, Massachusetts. The Project would also provide improved rail infrastructure and improve mobility and multimodal transportation access within the Project Area.

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# Scoping Report: Alternatives



## Scoping

- Preliminary Alternatives Identified
- Alternatives Screening
- Public Input

## Draft EIS

- Reasonable Alternatives: Carried forward into DEIS
- Preferred Alternative Identified
- Public Hearing

## Final EIS/ ROD

- \*Selected Alternative\*
- Federal Permits 90 days after combined FEIS/ROD

# Alternative Evaluation Criteria

- **Purpose & Need**
  - Does the alternative fully meet the Purpose & Need of the Project?
- **Construction Logistics**
  - Is the alternative feasible to construct with existing technologies?
- **Environmental Impacts**
  - Does the alternative cause excessive permanent environmental impacts to natural resources when compared to other alternatives?
- **Traffic Operations**
  - Does the alternative adversely impact travel times within the Project Area due to congested conditions on existing or proposed roadways, or at existing or proposed intersections?
  - Does the alternative result in worse LOS at existing or proposed intersections, or long vehicular queues that impact operations at adjacent intersections?



# Alternative Evaluation Criteria (Continued)

- **Rail Operations**

- Does the alternative support local and regional multi-modal (pedestrian, bicycle, bus, passenger vehicle, and transit) access to a future West Station?
- Does the alternative support the rail operation needs of MBTA including providing operational flexibility between Worcester Main Line, layover, and Grand Junction Railroad?

- **Cost and Schedule**

- Does the alternative require an unreasonably high cost compared to other alternatives?
- Does the alternative require an unreasonably complicated or lengthy project schedule?

# Preliminary Alternatives

- No Build
- Major Rehabilitation & Replacement
- Re-alignment (3L) with Options
  - Throat Area Options
  - West Station and Rail Layout Options



## No Build Alternative

- Frequent and continuous preservation activities (safety and maintenance improvements) to maintain continuing operation of the existing interchange
- Does not meet current Purpose & Need of the Project
- The “No Build” alternative is required in the MEPA & NEPA review processes and serves as a baseline against which the impacts of other alternatives can be compared.

# Major Rehabilitation & Replacement Alternative

- Upgrade the viaduct's original limited design load capacity to current structural capacity requirements.
- Replace bridge deck
- Replace steel stringers
- Strengthen/repair cross girders
- Strengthen/repair concrete columns and foundations
- Similar lane and shoulder width as existing condition
- New West Station with limited multimodal connectivity



## Re-alignment Alternative ("3L")

- I-90 Re-alignment with All Electronic Tolls (AET)
- I-90 constructed on new alignment
- Soldiers Field Road re-alignment
- Revised interchange configuration
- West Station, Track Work, and Layover Yard
- Options
  - 3 "Throat" Area Options
  - 3 West Station and Rail Layout Options



# Re-Alignment Alternative Plan ("3L")

**DRAFT**





# "Throat" Area Options

- Highway Viaduct
- At-Grade
- SFR Hybrid





# West Station and Rail Layout Options

- DEIR
- The Flip
- The Modified Flip





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# Scoping Report: Environmental Analysis (Methods)

- Description of the methods that will be used to assess potential impacts of the project
- Describes resource categories and topics to be considered
- Federal and state regulations that will be satisfied with this environmental review
- Federal and state permits and approvals that will likely be required for the project.

Land Use Impacts	Social Impacts – Roadway	Noise and Vibration
Visual Impacts	Social Impacts - Rail	Threatened & Endangered Species
Economic Impacts	Air Quality Impacts	Wetland Impacts, Water Body Modification and Wildlife Impacts
Historic & Archaeological Resources	Floodplain Impacts	And others...



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# Agency & Public Coordination



- **Agency Coordination Plan** – Facilitates and documents interaction between MassDOT, FHWA, and state and federal agencies during the EIS process. (Appendix B of the Scoping Report)
- **Public Involvement Plan** – Facilitates and documents interaction between MassDOT, FHWA, and the public during the NEPA process. (Appendix C of the Scoping Report)
- The PIP describes policies that guide public involvement in project development.

Project & Public Review Milestones	Anticipated Completion Date
Notice of Intent Publication ✓	October 18, 2019
Scoping Report Publication ✓	November 6, 2019
Completion of the DEIS	January 2021
Completion of the FEIS/ROD	October 2021
Permits, licenses, approvals after ROD	January 2022



# What Comes Next?

- **MassDOT and FHWA will summarize and respond to all substantive comments in a Scoping Summary Report after conclusion of the NEPA scoping comment period.**
- **Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Anticipated January 2021)**
  - Describes potential impacts of the alternatives considered
  - Describes mitigation strategies for unavoidable impacts
  - Identifies Preferred Alternative
  - Public Hearing
- **Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (Anticipated October 2021)**
  - Identifies Selected Alternative
  - Expand upon plans for mitigation, if necessary

## What Comes Next? (Continued)

- Public are invited to offer input at three additional public meetings:
  - Allston Multimodal Project Task Force: Wednesday, November 13, 2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m., Fiorentino Center, 123 Antwerp Street, Boston
  - Allston Multimodal Project Public Meeting: Wednesday, December 4, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Dunning Elementary School, 48 Frost Street, Framingham
  - Allston Multimodal Project Task Force, Wednesday, December 11, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Fiorentino Center, 123 Antwerp Street, Boston



# Commenting on the Scoping Report

- Electronic PDF's are available for download from the MassDOT website:  
<https://www.mass.gov/lists/allston-multimodal-project-2019-documents-and-meeting-materials>
- Hard copies of the report can be found at the following locations:
  - Boston Public Library System at Copley Square
  - Brookline Public Library System in Brookline Village
  - Honan Branch of the Boston Public Library System in Allston
  - Central Square Branch of the Cambridge Public Library
  - Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
  - Framingham Public Library
  - Worcester Public Library

# Commenting on the Scoping Report

- The scoping public comment period opened November 6<sup>th</sup> and will be open for 37 days.
- Comments are due December 12, 2019.
- Submit written comments on the Scoping Report via email to:  
[I-90Allston@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:I-90Allston@dot.state.ma.us)
- Written comments on the Scoping Report can also be submitted via hard copy to:

Jeffrey McEwen  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
55 Broadway, 10th Floor  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142

OR

Michael O'Dowd  
Acting Director of Bridge Project Management  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 6340  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116



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# Questions and Comments?

