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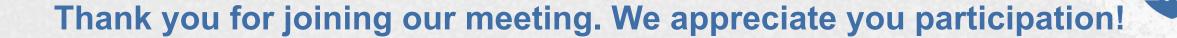
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# Today's Agenda



- Project Regulatory History
- MEPA/NEPA Schedule
- Contents of NPC Overview
- Commenting on the NPC



# Project Area







# Project Regulatory History - Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act



- MEPA Environmental Notification Form (ENF) Filed October 2014 (EDEEA File Number 15278)
  - Described the need for and major infrastructure components of the Project
  - Attachment 9 of the ENF described an alternatives analysis of 16 potential interchange designs
  - Identified the 3J design series as the preferred interchange concept
- MEPA Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) Filed 2017
  - Presented and analyzed a No Build Alternative as well as the 3K Alternative, advanced from the 3J Alternative described in the ENF
  - Presented and analyzed three "Throat Area" variations: Highway Viaduct, ABC (At-Grade), and Amateur Planner



# Project Regulatory History - National Environmental Policy Act



- Federal environmental review began with publication of NOI in the Federal Register in October 2019
- NEPA Scoping Report published in November 2019
  - Proposed purpose and need, project alternatives, and methodology for evaluating impacts
  - Presented the 3L Re-Alignment Alternative including West Station options and "Throat Area" options: Highway Viaduct, At-Grade and SFR Hybrid
- NEPA Scoping Summary Report published in August 2020
  - Documented design updates to project alternatives
  - Confirmed the No Build Alternative and the 3L Re-Alignment Alternative with the Modified Flip West Station and 3 "Throat Area" options to be carried forward for further analysis



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#### **Current Proposed MEPA/NEPA Schedule**



- MEPA Notice of Project Change (NPC): Spring 2022
- MEPA Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report (SDEIR):
   Winter 2023
- NEPA Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS): Fall 2023
- MEPA Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR): Spring 2024
- NEPA Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/ Record of Decision (ROD): Summer 2024



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# Purpose of the Notice of Project Change (NPC)



- The purpose of this document is to update the status of the Project in the state environmental review process (MEPA) to align with the advancements made to the Project since publication of the 2017 DEIR.
- MassDOT intends to follow-up this NPC with a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report (SDEIR) in the MEPA process.
- The NPC also provides a preliminary analysis of environmental effects associated with the Throat Area options which will be expanded upon in the SDEIR.
- This NPC does not discuss potential regulatory mitigation measures for adverse impacts in detail; those will be described in the SDEIR.



# Contents and Organization of the NPC



- Description of the Project as Most Recently Reviewed in 2017 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)
- Description of Material Changes to the Project as Previously Reviewed in 2017 DEIR
  - Updates to the Project Purpose and Need
  - Updates to the design and scope of Project Alternatives
  - Preliminary Analysis of Environmental Impacts associated with Build Alternative Throat Area options
- Response to Secretary's Certificate and agency and public comments received on the DEIR



## Updates to the Project Purpose and Need



- NPC updates the Project's MEPA purpose and need to better align with the purpose and need presented in the NEPA Scoping Report & Scoping Summary Report
- Greater emphasis on improving mobility and transportation access within the project area
  - Improve Level of Service within the I-90 interchange area
  - Provide or allow for a connection from BU and the Allston, Brighton and Brookline neighborhoods to the Charles River Reservation
  - Upgrade the PDW Path to provide a two-way pedestrian and bicycle facility
- Continues to include rail improvements
  - Construction of a new West Station
  - Infrastructure supporting mid-day commuter rail operation
- Continues to address roadway deficiencies and safety concerns
  - Structurally deficient I-90 viaduct



#### **Updates to the No Build Alternative**





- The No Build Alternative
  describes the conditions that
  would exist should the Project not
  be implemented and makes
  assumptions regarding the future
  transportation network including
  what physical improvements
  would occur.
- The scope of the No Build
  Alternative has been updated to
  take into account MassDOT's
  separate Bridge Preservation
  Project.
- Scope now includes frequent and continuous preservation activities, such as safety and maintenance improvements, to maintain continuing operation of the existing interchange.



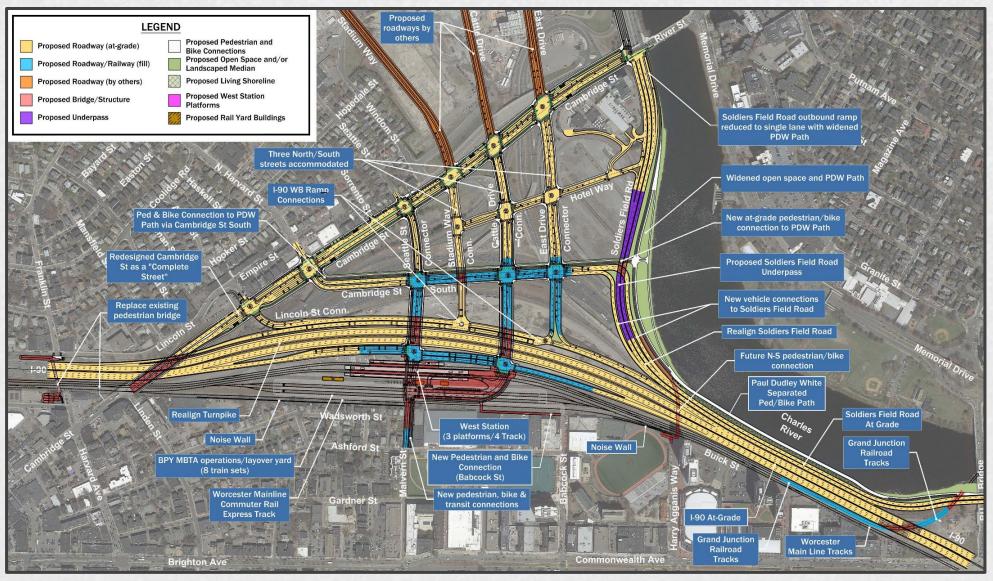
## Updates to the Project Build Alternatives



- DEIR Preferred Interchange 3K and "Throat Area" variations refined as a result of public and stakeholder input on DEIR, Independent Review Team Study and NEPA Scoping Process:
- MassDOT's Preferred Interchange 3L Re-alignment Alternative
- Modified Flip West Station and Rail Layout
- Throat Area Options
  - Modified At-Grade Option
  - Modified Highway Viaduct Option
  - SFR Hybrid Option

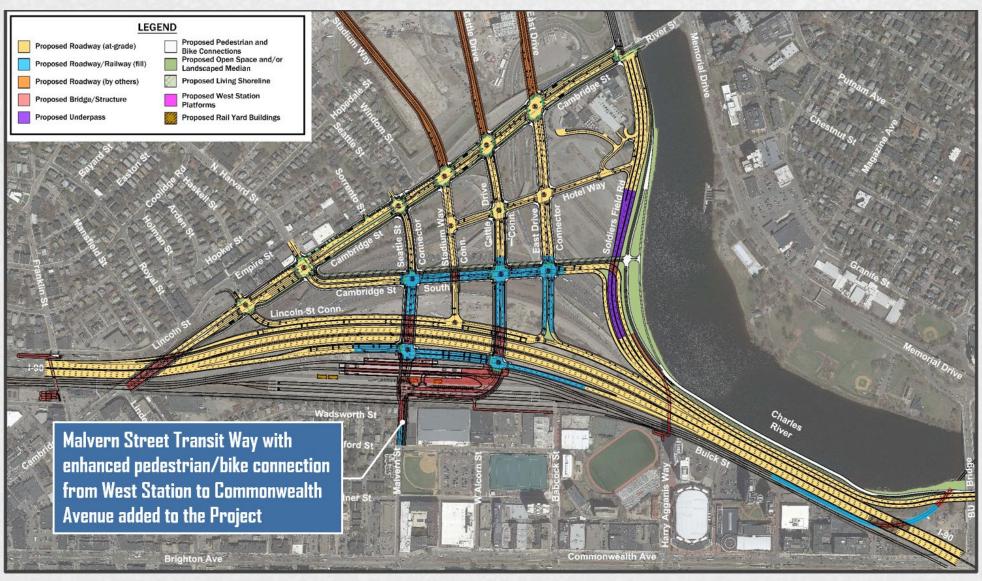






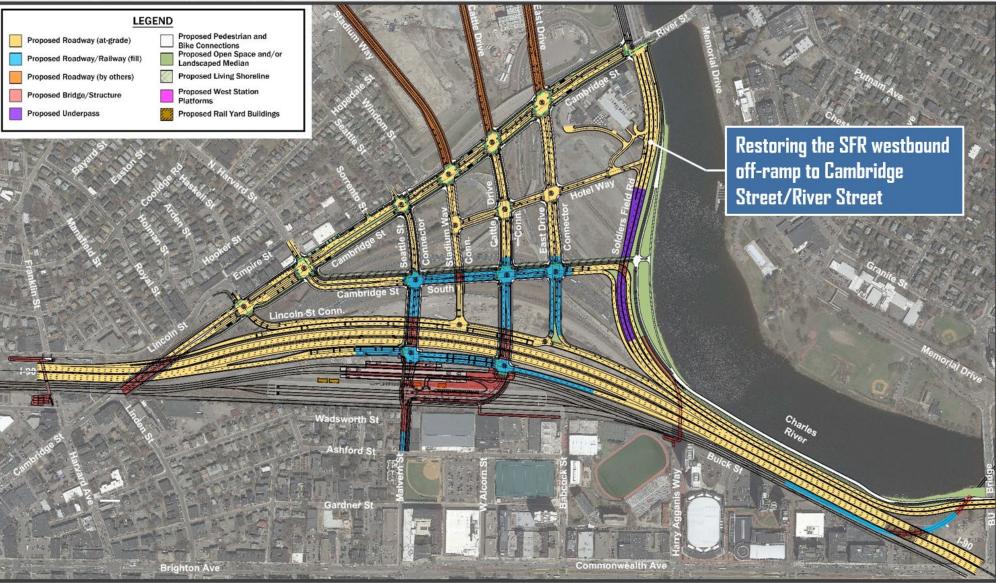






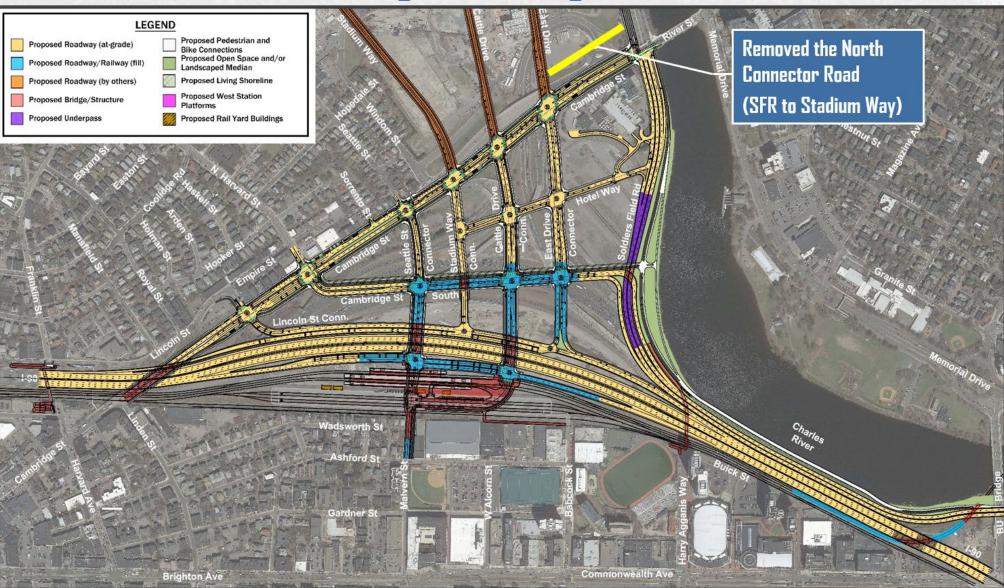






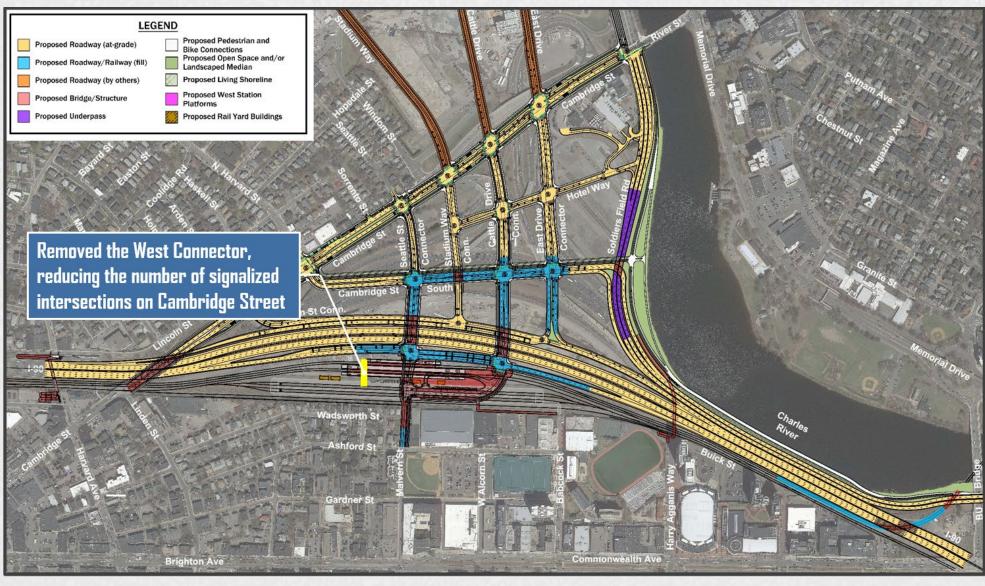






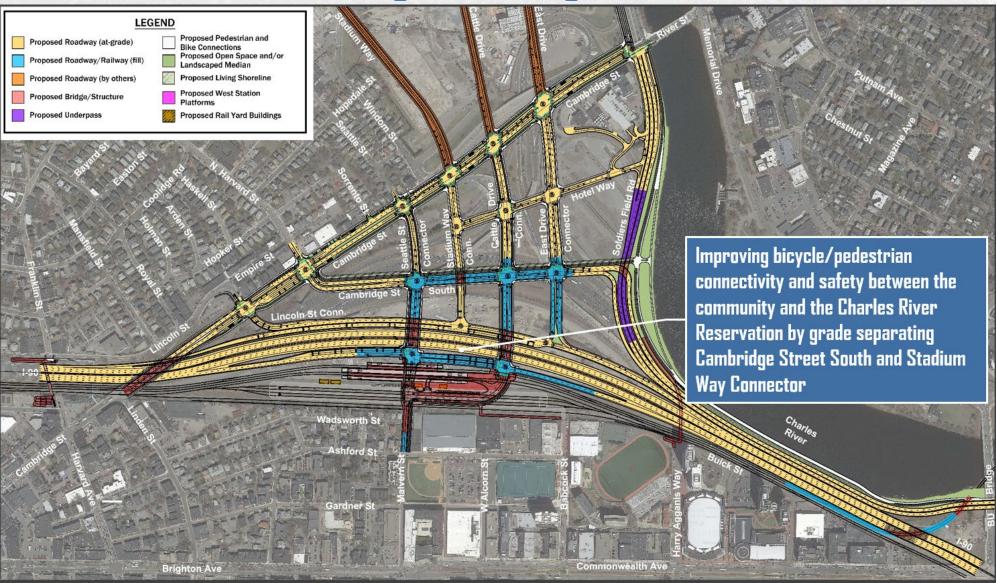






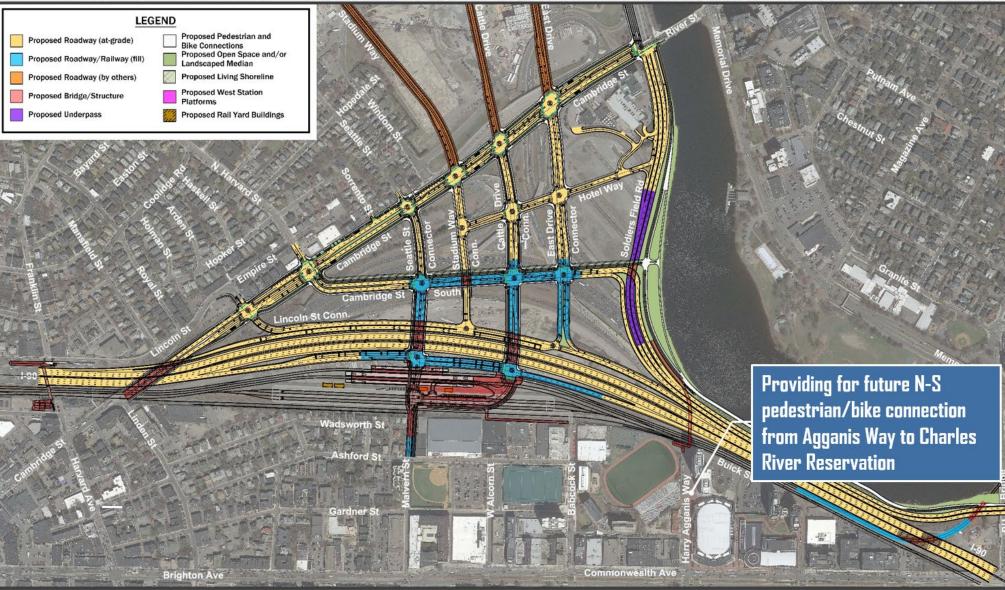






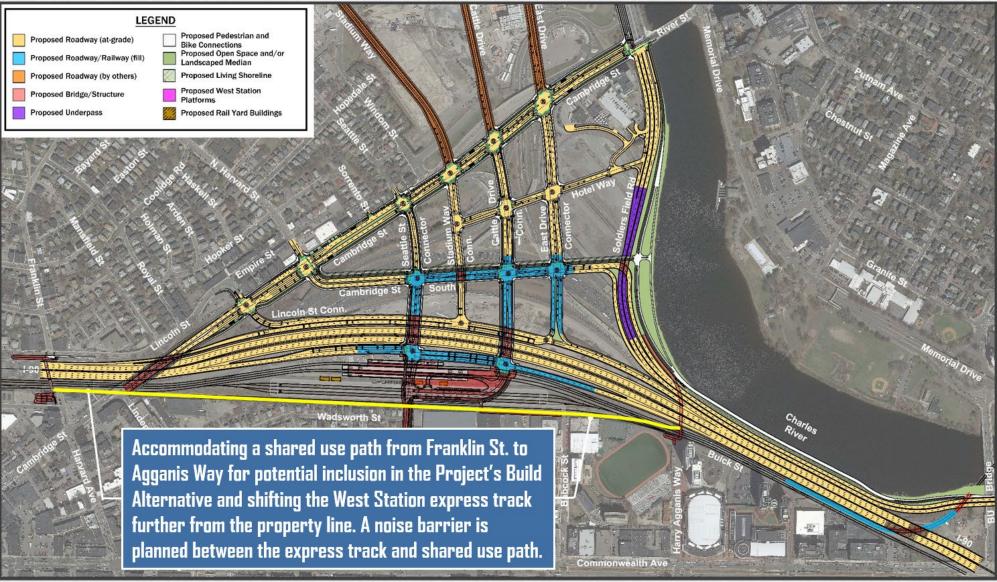






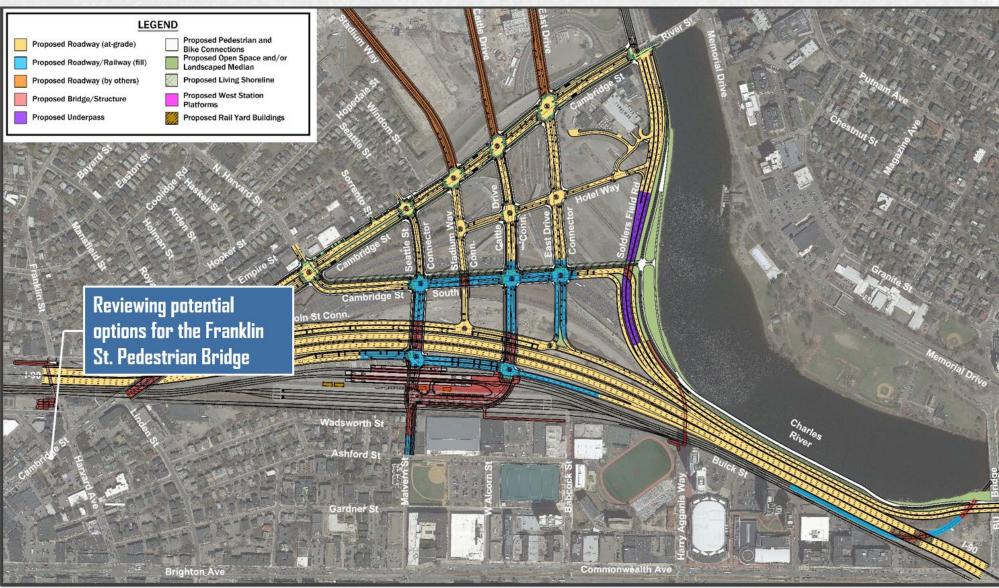






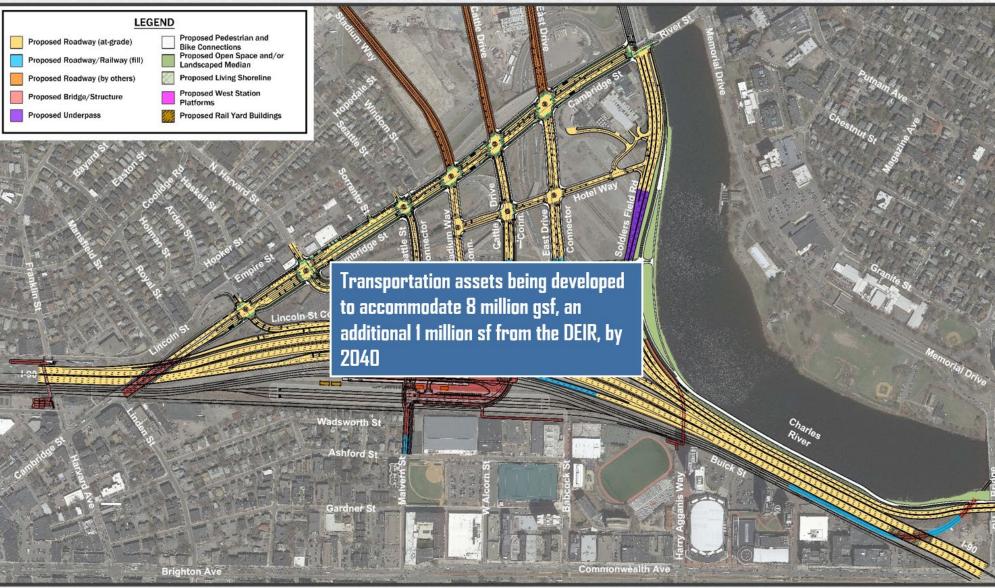






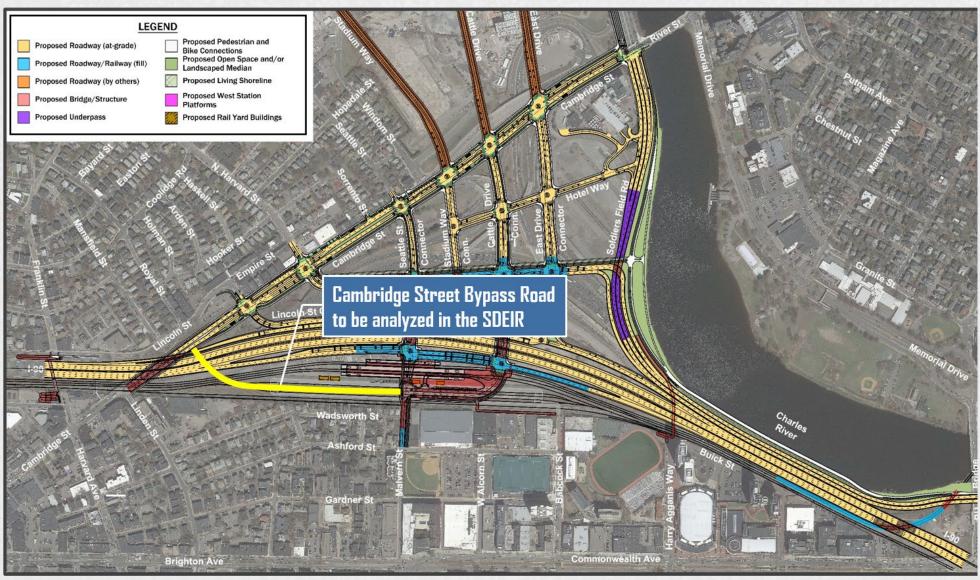














#### **Updates to West Station**



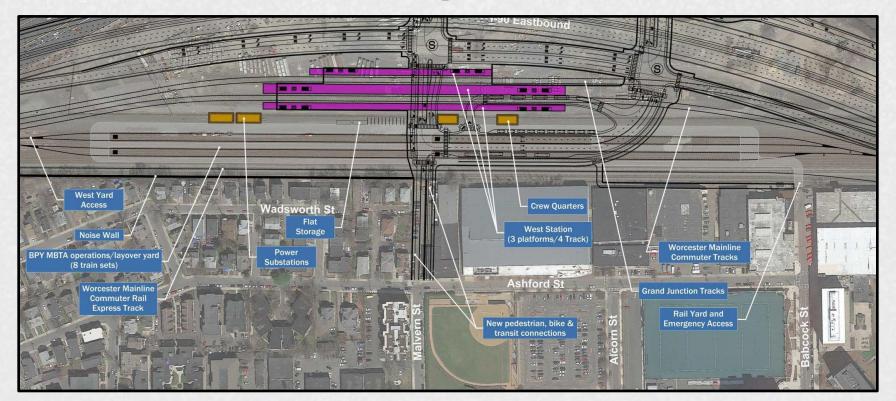
- The DEIR included a multimodal West Station located within BPY along the existing WML
  tracks on the southern edge of the site. Under this design, there would be two WML tracks,
  two GJR tracks, three platforms, and walk-up access from the south for pedestrians to
  access the station platforms.
- Harvard University then conceived a design concept for West Station known as the "Flip"
  that would relocate the proposed platforms to the north of BPY and adjust the layover yard
  to the south.
- While the Flip would provide for future GJR service, this layout has limitations including reduced speeds, increased travel time and limited operational flexibility.
- The Flip layout was further refined. The "Modified Flip" would include the WML rail
  operational infrastructure of the DEIR layout, while incorporating key elements of the Flip.



#### **Updates to West Station (contd.)**



- Modified Flip West Station and Rail Layout modified for 4 track & 3 platform operation
- Includes express track to the south to accommodate more express trains in future
- Accommodates shared use path from Franklin St. to Agganis Way for potential inclusion in the Project's Build Alternative
- Allows for future two-track urban rail service to Cambridge





#### Updates to the Throat Area

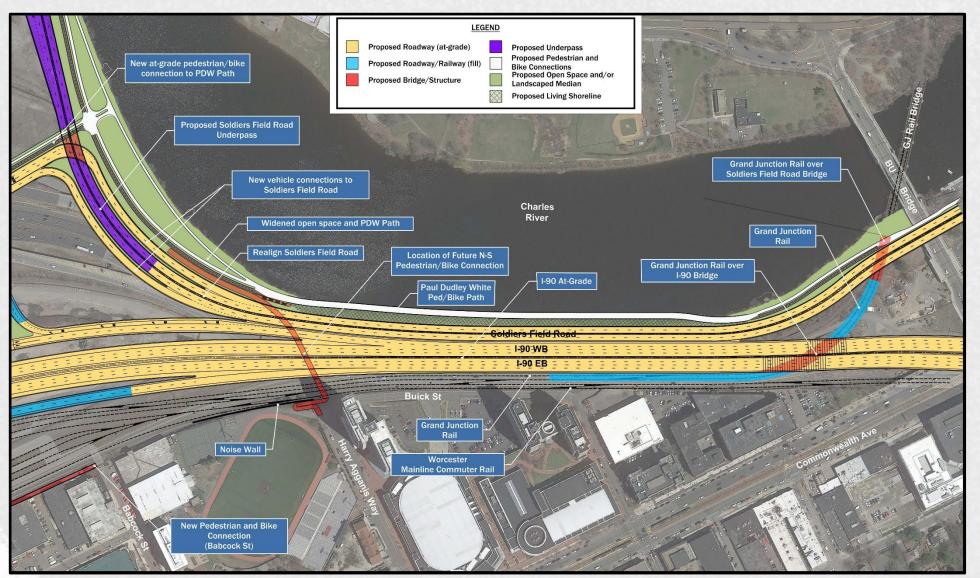


- After publication of the DEIR and at the request of the Secretary of Transportation, an Independent Review Team (IRT) further evaluated the three Throat Area options:
  - Highway Viaduct: Overall recommendations were similar to the design proposed in the DEIR
  - ABC/At-Grade: Suggestion to place the PDW Path on a cantilever or pile supported structure over the Charles River
  - Amateur Planner: Suggestion to elevate SFR, instead of GJR, over I-90 resulting in a new Throat Area option design called the SFR Hybrid
- MassDOT has continued to refine design of the Throat Area options to present an optimized design for each option.
- MassDOT has publicly announced it will focus on advancing the Modified At-Grade design for the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project which comes after significant stakeholder engagement as well as input and support from elected officials and the Project Task Force.
- MassDOT will continue to assess each alternative considered in detail in the SDEIR so readers can evaluate their comparative merits.



#### Throat Area Options: Modified At-Grade - Plan View

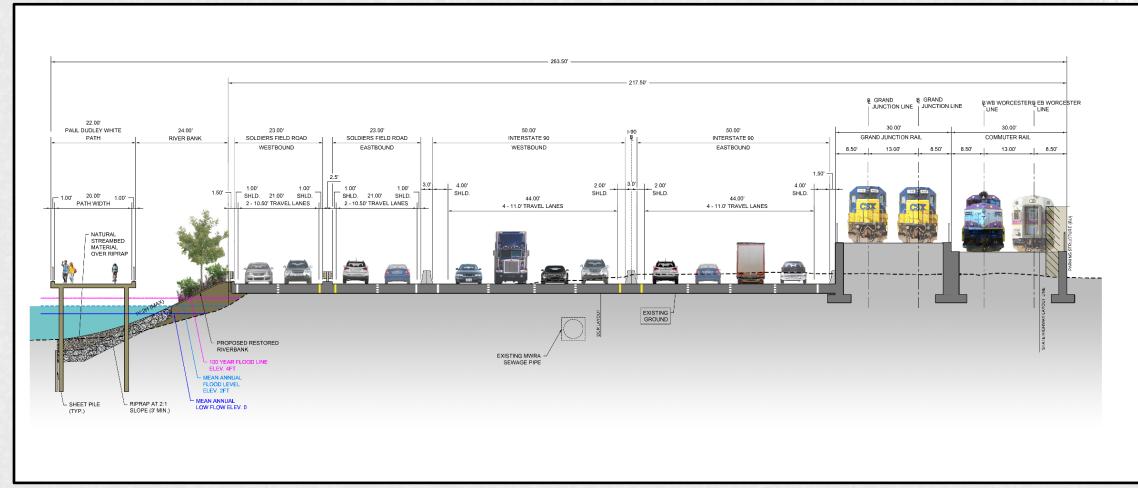




- Removes existing visual and physical barrier of the viaduct, providing a marked improvement to connectivity and access as well as the visual quality to the neighborhood
- PDW Path shifted north onto boardwalk over the Charles River and allows for separated ped/bike PDW Path and riverbank enhancements
- Accommodates future N-S (Agganis Way) ped/bike crossing
- Allows for extension of PDW Path below GJR bridge over SFR



#### Throat Area Options: Modified At-Grade - Cross Section



- I-90 right shoulders increased from 2 feet to 4 feet, left shoulders remain 2 feet and travel lanes remain 11 feet)
- SFR travel lanes increased from 10 feet to 10.5 feet and shoulders remain 1 foot

 PDW Path shifted north onto boardwalk over the Charles River and allows for separated ped/bike
 paths and riverbank enhancements



# Visual - DEIR At-Grade







#### Visual - NPC Modified At-Grade Option



- No viaducts, resulting in improved views of the Charles River from the south
- Separated ped/bike facilities with improved views for users of the PDW Path
- Enhanced Charles Riverbank Potential shoreline treatment options described in NPC





# Modified At-Grade - FHWA Concerns and Design Refinement

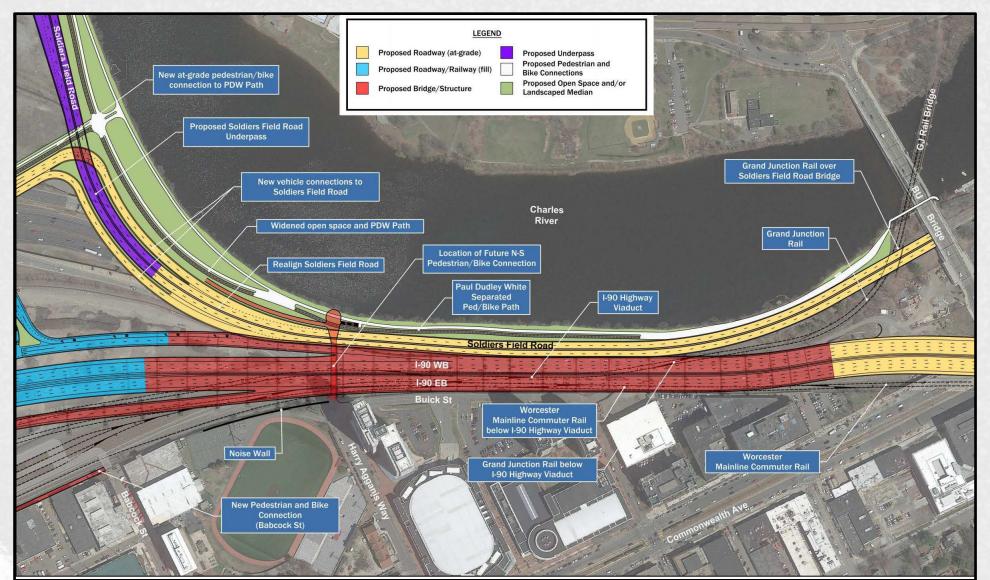


- Over the course of the NEPA environmental review process, FHWA has flagged concerns regarding the current design of the Modified At-Grade and its potential to impact floodplains (23 CFR 650 Subpart A).
- As currently designed, the Modified At-Grade option includes a depressed section under the Grand Junction Railroad bridge. FHWA has determined it is located within a floodplain because a 50-year rainfall event has the potential to result in pluvial flooding of that portion of 1-90.
- MassDOT is continuing to coordinate with FHWA regarding refinements to the Modified
   At-Grade option to address the regulations and minimize impacts to floodplains



#### Throat Area Options: Modified Highway Viaduct - Plan View



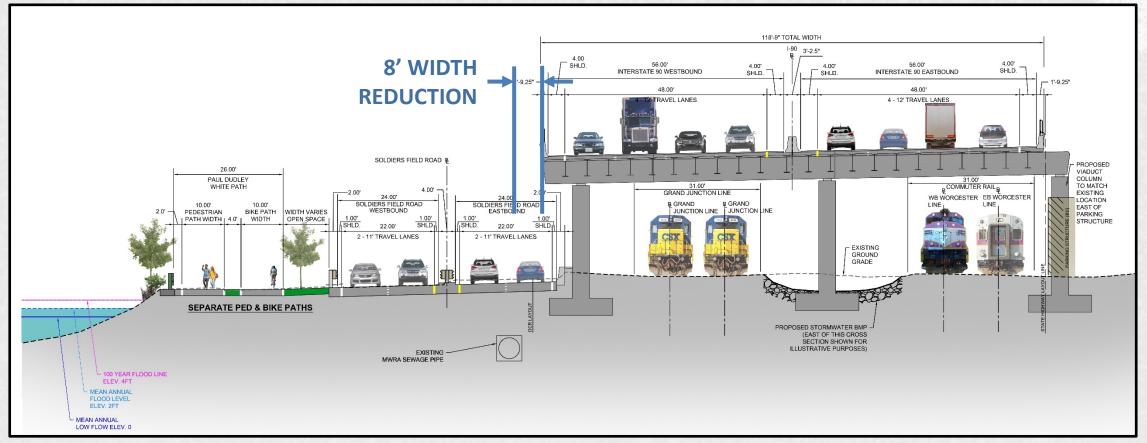


- Viaduct width decreased by 8 feet from DEIR variation
- Pier column arrangement reduced from 4 to 3 columns
- Allows for further realignment of SFR to the south resulting in a greater limit of separated ped/bike PDW Path
- Accommodates future N-S
   (Agganis Way) ped/bike
   crossing



#### Throat Area Options: Modified Highway Viaduct - Cross Section





- Viaduct width decreased by 8 feet from DEIR (Right shoulders decreased from 8 feet to 4 feet, left shoulders remain 4 feet and travel lanes remain 12 feet)
- Pier column arrangement reduced from 4 to 3 columns
- Allows for further realignment of SFR to the south and allows for greater limit of separated ped/bike PDW Path
- SFR travel lanes remain 11 feet and shoulders remain 1 foot



# Visual - DEIR Highway Viaduct







# Visual - NPC Modified Highway Viaduct Option

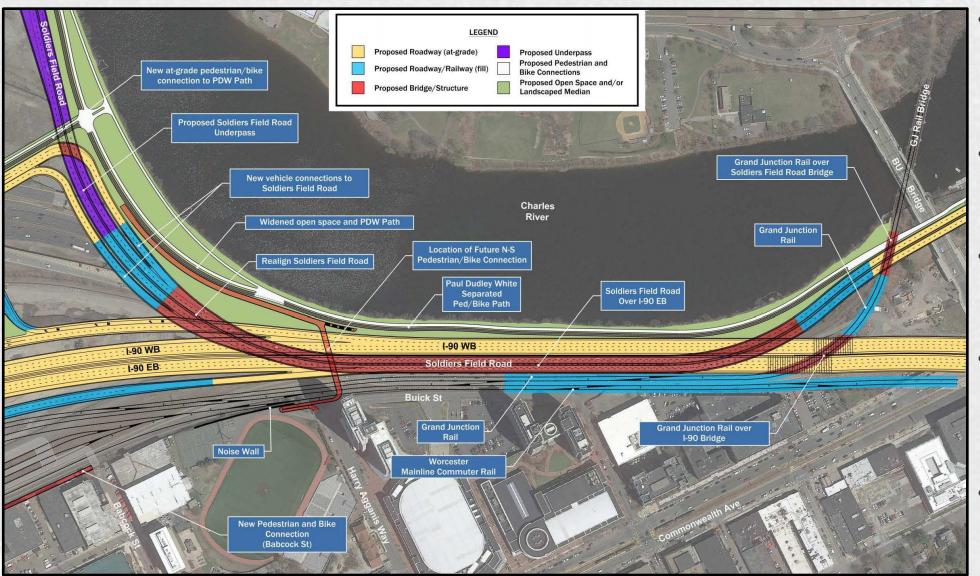
ALLSTON INTERCHANGE

- 1-90 remains on a viaduct
- Separated ped/bike PDW Path





#### Throat Area Options: SFR Hybrid - Plan View

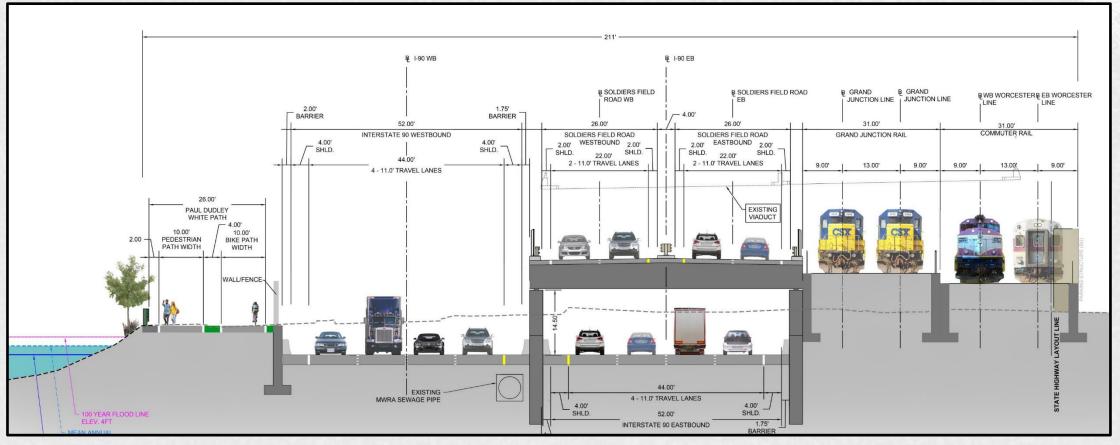


- DEIR 3K-AMP Throat
   Variation replaced with
   SFR Hybrid as a result of
   2018 IRT Report
- Interstate 90 at- or substantially below existing ground elevation
- Soldiers Field Road on a viaduct over Interstate 90 eastbound
- PDW Path location similar as existing and provides separated ped/bike PDW Path within Throat Area
- Allows for extension of PDW Path below GJR bridge over SFR



#### Throat Area Options: SFR Hybrid - Cross Section





- Interstate 90 (11 foot travel lanes and 4 foot shoulders) at- or substantially below existing ground elevation
- Soldiers Field Road (11 foot travel lanes and 2 foot shoulders) on a viaduct over Interstate 90 eastbound
- PDW Path location similar as existing and provides separated ped/bike PDW Path within Throat Area



# Visual - NPC SFR Hybrid

ALLSTON INTERCHANGE

- Replaces I-90 viaduct with a smaller SFR viaduct
- Separated ped/bike PDW Path





### NPC - Preliminary Analysis of Environmental Impacts



 The NPC provides a preliminary update on potential environmental effects associated with each Build Alternative Throat Area option.

Land Use	Climate Change and Resiliency	Environmental Justice
Visual	Noise and Vibration	Threatened & Endangered Species
Socioeconomic	Air Quality	Wetlands, Waterways, Floodplain and Navigation
Historic & Archaeological Resources	Open Space and Recreation	Wildlife and Fisheries
Stormwater	Geology and OHM	Transportation (Pedestrian/Bike, Rail Operations, Highways and Streets)

 Environmental effects of all alternatives and potential mitigation measures will be further analyzed and described in the SDEIR.



### NPC Filing - DEIR Response to Comments



- MassDOT received over 575 comment letters and emails on DEIR
- Responses to EEA Secretary's Certificate on the 2017 DEIR are included in Appendix A
  of the NPC
- Frequent comments and responses are summarized in Appendix B of the NPC
- Responses to all public and agency comments are included in Appendix C of the NPC
- Most frequently received comments received on the DEIR included comments related to:
  - West Station Design and Timing
  - Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
  - Creating New Parkland
  - Support for an at-grade Throat Area design
  - Potential Mitigation Measures



#### Summary of Public Outreach Since Publication of DEIR



- Public outreach since publication of the DEIR has included:
  - 21 meetings with the Project Task Force, including 3 meetings with the IRT and one 5-hour workshop;
  - 5 public information meetings, 1 in Brighton, 2 in Framingham, 1 in Worcester and one conducted virtually due to COVID-19; and
  - 2 site walks at the request of Project Task Force membership.
- In addition, the Project team has held an array of targeted briefings, including:
  - 1 for Cambridgeport residents;
  - 3 for rowing and powerboating users of the Charles River;
  - 1 for the Allston Civic Association;
  - 1 for the Brookline Transportation Committee
- MassDOT will continue these public outreach efforts moving forward, including a focused outreach effort for Environmental Justice Populations potentially affected by the Project in accordance with MEPA's Public Involvement Protocol for Environmental Justice Populations



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# Commenting on the Notice of Project Change



- To receive updates on the NPC filing and other Project updates, subscribe to the Project's mailing list here: <u>Massachusetts Department of Transportation</u> (govdelivery.com)
- Electronic PDFs are anticipated to be available for download from the MassDOT website later this month: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/allston-multimodal-project">https://www.mass.gov/allston-multimodal-project</a>
- NPC anticipated to be noticed in the Environmental Monitor in July
- Comment period will close 21 days from notice in the Environmental Monitor
- Hard copies of the report will be available at the following locations:
  - Boston Public Library –
     Copley
  - Cambridge Public Library
  - Worcester Public Library

- Boston Public Library Honan/Allston
- Framingham Public Library



#### **Comments to MEPA**



Beth Card, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs

**Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs** 

Attn: Alex Strysky, MEPA Office

**EEA No. 15278** 

100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor

Boston, MA 02114

Alexander.Strysky@state.ma.us





#### **Share Your Questions and Comments**





Submit your questions and comments using the Q&A button



"Raise your hand" to be unmuted for verbal questions



Please state your name before your question



 Please share only 1 question or comment at a time, limited to 2 minutes, to allow others to participate.



 To ask a question via phone, dial \*9 and the moderator will call out the last 4-digits of your phone number and unmute your audio when it is your turn.

Please be advised that all Q&A and comments are subject to disclosure for public records, therefore use these functions for project-related business only.

