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MassDOT Project Manager

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HSH Project No.: 2013061.14

Subject: MassDOT
Allston I-90
NEPA Framingham Public Information Meeting
Meeting Notes of December 4, 2019

Overview

On December 4th, 2019, a public meeting was held for the I-90 Multimodal Project. The meeting took place on Wednesday, December 4, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at Dunning Elementary School in Framingham, MA to introduce meeting attendees to the contents of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Scoping Report, provide an overview of the ongoing federal environmental permitting process for the I-90 Allston project, and outline the process for members of the public to comment on the report document.

Comments on the scoping report echoed themes voiced during MassDOT's public information meetings during the summer of 2019 to introduce residents of MetroWest and Central Massachusetts to the I-90 Multimodal Project. While residents of these areas, and attendees at the meeting documented herein, generally believe that the project will provide significant benefits to Allston-Brighton and, in the long-term benefits to the regional through improved infrastructure – express commuter tracks to speed expresses past West Station for those seeking to get to Back Bay and Boston and a safer, more dependable I-90 – concerns over construction period impacts, particularly to the commuter rail dominate their thinking. In the case of attendees at this meeting, concern was expressed that impacts to I-90 and the commuter rail during construction will stress the MetroWest economy and threaten efforts by Framingham to revitalize its downtown through construction of transit oriented housing.

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Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

Welcome & Opening Remarks

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH: Good evening. Welcome to the Dunning Elementary School. I'd like to say a special welcome to Dennis Giombetti, who is here representing Senate President Spilka. Representative Lewis is present. Shannon Alessandroni is here from Representative Robinson's office. I want to thank Dennis, who I know used his extensive network to help boost this meeting and let people know that it's here. Shannon was very helpful in helping us find this room. Representative Kane has just joined us. Representative Kane's office was also helpful in getting out the word in this meeting. I appreciate all of your efforts.

This is our agenda for this meeting. We've covered the introductions. What we're going to talk through tonight is the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project Scoping Report. What the scoping report is, what's in it, how you comment on it, and where we go from there. There's also a bit of an introduction to the NEPA process in what we're going to talk about tonight.

The meeting tonight is intended to introduce the scoping report to the public and respond to any questions or comments that you have on the process or the timing. You're welcome to provide any questions or comments that you have on the content of the report. We had a kickoff for this in Brighton, which is right up against the project area. I know a few of you were present at that meeting. The comment period on this project closes on December 12th. If you want your comment to be reflected in what's being done in the scoping report, please make sure that you have it in by December 12th. We have where that goes towards the end of the presentation.

The ground rules. We ask that you hold your questions and comments until the end. When you signed in, there was an 'I wish to speak' sign-up sheet. Unless we get a large crowd, I'll probably just do hands when we get to the end of this — two minutes for your comments. We will be ending at 9 PM due to the permit; I'll try to get you out of here by 8:30 PM. We don't have any

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.

Taskforce members present, should they show up, we'll hold their comments until the end. We have a regular meeting of the I-90 Allston Taskforce coming up next week.

At this point, I'd like Melissa Toni from the Federal Highway Administration to come up and tell us about NEPA.

Presentation

C: Melissa Toni, FHWA: Thank you, Nate. My name is Melissa Toni. I'm from the Federal Highway Administration; we're the federal lead agency with responsibility over the National Environmental Policy Act portion of this project. I'm going to cover a bit about NEPA so you have a background and can frame your comments moving forward.

What is NEPA? It's the National Environmental Policy Act. It's a federal law that requires federal agencies, like ours, to conduct environmental reviews for environmental effects of our actions. The I-90 Allston project is considered our action. For several reasons, we're going to be providing funding. There's access on an interstate, so that's why we're pulled in because we're the overarching federal agency, that's why we're the lead agency that's handling it.

There are other federal agencies involved, and you can see them at the bottom. I can go through them quickly. That's our logo on the left. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. ECHP, that's the advisory council on historic preservation. U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There's a specific group of regulations set forth by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ); that's who sets our NEPA regulations, and it dictates how we go through our procedures. If you want any legal framework, I would start there. The CEQ tells us that each federal agency must have its own NEPA regulations. You would drill down from there. You look at CEQ, you look at FHWA regulations, and go from there.

We've determined that this project should go through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). That is our highest level of analysis under NEPA. Under that, we take a hard look at the environmental impacts of a project. We're now in scoping – there's a diagram on the next slide that shows you exactly where we are. There's a scoping report that was published on November 6th, 2019; that's where we are now – it kicked off the scoping process. We have a 37-day public comment period. The 37 days incorporate Thanksgiving; that's why we have 37 days instead of the usual 30 days. The scoping process determines the scope of issues to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement. What we're looking for is comments from you on what should be considered in the document. As we move forward on the project, what we're looking for is feedback from the public on what should be considered throughout our analysis – are we missing

some things or is there something that we don't know about. This is your first opportunity to comment on the project; it isn't your last.

The Purpose and Need is the start. It defines the purpose of the project and the needs out there that we're trying to solve as far as the problem. At the conclusion, there will be a scoping summary report. It will address substantive comments and tell us how to proceed from there to the Environmental Impact Statement.

Here's the diagram that I was talking about. You can see where we are with the arrows. We're really early in the process. There's going to be a Scoping Summary Report, then a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), then a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). We don't get into a detailed or final design at all until after the Record of Decision. Right now, this whole process is preliminary.

Next, I'm going to hand it over to Mark, who's going to explain more about the project.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: For anyone that came in later, please make sure to sign in. The presentation is posted to the I-90 Allston Project website. It's on the 2019 documents page along with a copy of the Scoping Report.

C: Mark Fobert, Tetra Tech: Mark Fobert, I'm with Tetra Tech. I'm an environmental consultant on this project. This is the project area, starting in the west at the Franklin Street pedestrian bridge, Cambridge Street running along this edge; the northern edge of this project is along Soldiers' Field Road, Charles River, Paul D. White path. You've got the MBTA commuter rail along the south side. Major infrastructure is the Beacon Park Yard, I-90, and the MBTA commuter rail.

This project has gone through quite a history on the state side, not on the federal side. On the state side, we did an Environmental Notification Form with MEPA in October 2014. There was a placemaking study done in October 2016. A Draft Environmental Impact Report in November 2017. An Independent Review Team Report in 2018 for options for the "throat." There have been Taskforce meetings going since 2014. We've been working on this for a while, so the options are pretty developed, but we are at the beginning of the federal process, so we can't jump ahead.

This is basically the format of the scoping report; this is the way it's organized: purpose and need, the alternatives, analysis, and the agency public coordination.

Purpose and need statement is a very important part of the project. The lead agency, in this case the Federal Highway Administration has the responsibility to find the purpose and need for the requirements of the NEPA analysis. Under NEPA regulations, the purpose and need briefly specifies the underlying purpose and need to the agency is responding to which transportation deficiencies. It answers the question of why the project is needed. It is also the basis of the alternatives analysis, that's very important; it's a screening criteria. The screening criteria set forth in the purpose and need shouldn't be so narrow that it completely limits the choices to one alternative.

This is the need portion of the project. The needs are roadway deficiencies. The I-90 viaduct is structurally deficient, with substandard highway layout geometry, safety – it's a high crash location, one of the highest in the state. There are constraints on the commuter rail operations. There's a transit demand for new connections in the area and commuter rail layover needs. Our last need is mobility limitations and transportation access. That's limitations on the interchange ramps, service queuing times, Paul Dudley White Path – the path on the Charles River has substandard width, it's only about eight feet today. There's limited access to the Charles River, and there's limited access to multimodal transportation in the project area.

This is our project purpose; it's a very short statement. It's to address roadway deficiencies and address safety issues of Interstate I-90 mainline and Interstate I-90 interchange between 19 and 20. In Allston, MA, the project will also improve rail infrastructure, improve mobility and multimodal infrastructure, and access to the project area.

Now we're going to talk about the alternatives and where we are. We're at the top of the NEPA process; we're in scoping. At this point, the scoping report identifies how many alternatives, the screening criteria, and how the alternatives are screened. Public input is what tonight's all about. The next step will be a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). In that document, reasonable alternatives that are identified in the scoping report will be carried forth in the DEIS. A preferred alternative is identified to get more public input. The final step is the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) and the record of decision (ROD). That's when the alternative is identified. It is expected that federal permits will be in-hand in 90 days after that record of decision is issued. The whole thing is a two-year process, and we're at the beginning.

These are the evaluation criteria. The primary criteria is the purpose and need. Then we look as secondary screening criteria, which is construction logistics - can the project be built using the existing technologies? Environmental impacts - does one of the alternatives have greater environmental impacts than the other alternatives? We also look at traffic operations, does it

improve congestion or result in worse conditions? And rail operations, does the alternative support local and regional multimodal pedestrian, bicycle, bus, passenger vehicle, and transit? That's for a future West Station. Does the alternative support the rail operations of the MBTA, including operational flexibility? And cost and schedule. Those are the evaluation criteria. That's the secondary criteria. Again, the primary criterion is the purpose and need statement.

These are the alternatives that were included in the scoping report. There's the no-build, the major rehabilitation replacement, the realignment of 3L with the throat area options. There are three throat area options and three West Station layover options, which are presented in the scoping report. The no-build option is continued maintenance and keeping the viaduct operational as it is today. It doesn't meet the purpose and need, but it is required when we do our NEPA analysis to have a baseline, and that no-build option is the baseline alternative that we measure everything else against.

The major road rehabilitation replacement alternative is the upgrade of the existing viaduct in the same location. The substructure and superstructure would all be improved. The lanes stay the same, and there are no breakdown lanes; everything is the same as it is today, just strengthened. There is an opportunity to do a new West Station in this alternative, but it has very limited multimodal connectivity.

Finally, there's the realignment alternative – 3L. Soldiers' Field Road is realigned and an at-grade I-90 is tied into the revised interchange configuration. West station includes a bus station, track work, and a layover yard. We have three options in the throat area and three options in the West Station area. This is the 3L Alternative that's in the scoping report. I'm not going to get deep into the description of this alternative. This is the throat area that I talked about; the area between Boston University and the Charles River. It's very constrained; it's about 210 feet. A lot of infrastructure has to fit in there. We have to fit Soldiers' Field Road, I-90, the Worcester Mainline, and Paul Dudley White path all in this tight corridor. That's a major constraint, and that's why there are different alternatives for that area. The second one place where we have alternatives is at West Station. There are three West Station layout options.

In terms of throat area options, there is the highway viaduct, I-90 elevated throughout the project. Then we have the at grade, which all elements are at grade; I-90, the rail, Soldiers' Field Road, everything is at the same level, at or just below grade. Soldiers' Field Road over I-90 and I-90 depressed. Soldiers' Field Road is relocated and makes more space for a park to improve Paul Dudley White Path in that area along the river. Those are the three options presented in the scoping report that you'll see.

West Station, the rail layout options. There's the DEIR option; West Station would be located along the southern edge of the site with a layover yard located to the north. The flip places West Station north of Beacon Park Yard with a layover yard to the south. There's potential for a buffer park, but we haven't examined that yet. The modified flip places West Station to the north of Beacon Park Yard, a layover yard to the south. This option includes two express tracks to the south.

I'm going to talk about environmental analysis and methods. These are things that we're going to be looking at when we prepare the EIS. It's a description of the methods that will be used to assess the potential impacts of the project. The preferred alternative describes the resource categories, the top to be considered. Also described are the Federal and state regulations that are applicable to the project and a detailed list of permits and state approval required. It's quite a list of analyses that we perform. This is all outlined in the scoping report.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH: Just a couple of things for you to take a look at in the report. There is an Appendix B of the scoping report, which is the agency coordination plan. That illustrates to you how MassDOT and the various federal and state agencies will interact during the EIS process. There is also the Public Involvement Plan, which is Appendix C. It indicates what my staff and I will be doing for the next two years. It describes the policies that guide public involvement as well. It's a serious document.

These are some important dates to be aware of. Right now, the Notice of Intent to public the Scoping Report was published in October. The Scoping Report was published on November 6th. There is a paper copy available in the Framingham Public Library at the reference desk. We have a way to go before the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that's set for January 2021. The completion of the Final Environment Impact Statement (FEIS) and record of decision is expected in October 2021. We look to have the permits, licenses, and approvals by January 2022. There is still a lot to do before a shovel goes in the ground.

There is an upcoming I-90 Allston Taskforce meeting on December 11th at the Fiorentino Center if anyone would like to come to that. MassDOT and FHWA will summarize and respond to the substantive comments in a Scoping Summary Report that will be issued after the comment period closes. The DEIS is set for January 2021 which will have the potential impacts of the alternative considered and mitigation strategies for unavoidable impacts. We can't skip steps, so that's when you'll start to see those components. We'll identify a preferred alternative and have a round of public involvement associated with that document. Then, the FEIS and Record of

Decision would come out in October 2021. It identifies the selected alternative and, if necessary, expands on plans for mitigation.

Here is how you comment. You can download an electronic copy of the Scoping Report from MassDOT's website at the top of the 2019 documents page. There are hard copies available. If anyone is in the Brighton area, there are copies at the Brighton Library - Faneuil Branch. As noted, the scoping period was open for 37 days because of Thanksgiving. The comments are due on December 12th. You can also send your comments by email. If you want to send something in writing, you can send it to Jeffrey McEwen, the Division Administration at FHWA. Or the Project Manager from MassDOT, Mike O'Dowd. I'm going to leave the contact information up on the screen.

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH: Do any elected officials wish to speak?

C: Representative Jack Patrick Lewis, Massachusetts House of Representatives: You've heard from us a lot.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH: And I'm sure we'll hear more. It's an ongoing productive dialogue. Hands from the general audience? Surely we can't possibly have answered everything.

C: Mary Connaughton, Pioneer Institute: I just have a couple of questions and a comment. As we know, this area is going to be very impacted by construction because of people taking the Turnpike in, and it's an eight to ten-year project. We also have a commuter rail line that's going to be impacted as well. The extent is pretty significant. On page 33 of the Scoping Report, when it refers to the Soldiers' Field Road Hybrid option which is the option that's moving forward in the process says that the Worcester Main Line is also impacted because of space constraints because of the construction; one of the two tracks will require disclosure for up to half the duration of construction. That's four to five years with one track. I don't know how many of you used to take the train when it was a single-track operation. I did, and I know what happens; you stop, and you wait and wait for another train to pass. That's very disruptive. Framingham has about five major developments going in within reasonable proximity to a train station. Correct me if I'm wrong, it's 1,800 or 2,000 units. If the train doesn't work well, it's going to impact the success of those units and the success of the downtown revitalization. That's a very long time for the train to be down to a single track. It will impact a lot here, not only for the commuters going in but in our regional corridor.

Also, the throat option at the top of page 33 says that construction staging for this option will necessarily require more time than other throat options to move major utilities, construct

temporary trestles, and sequentially construct the proposed intercity rail infrastructure. It's saying that the option that we selected is going to take more time than the other throat options. That's a concern. The at-grade option was dismissed as not meeting purpose and need, primarily because there would not be a neighborhood connection for people from Allston, Brighton, Brookline, and Boston University to give them access to the Charles River, so they can walk over non-motorized access. I know there are other environmental concerns with permitting. I don't understand it. I don't see that connection, which seems to be a significant issue. It's important that the people in the neighborhood that are impacted get their services, but it also impacts us. I don't see in the SFR Hybrid option, how direct that connection is. It would make sense if it was an at-grade option, that option could be more direct and not have to go around a viaduct.

The question is, what is the plan for that connection? The connections seem to be what's holding back an at-grade or a modified at-grade option for the DEIR.

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH: Mike, would you like to speak to the Secretary's letter and considerations for the connections?

A: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT: Sure. This has been brought to our attention several times in the past. Mary, you've certainly brought it to our attention over the last couple of months; you've attended many of the Taskforce meetings that we've conducted in Allston. Certainly, the validity of how long construction is going to be interrupting commuter rail service is important to everybody. It's also going to be an overall impact on the project if we're not able to manage and maintain commuter rail, I-90, and Soldiers' Field Road. One of the commitments that we've made early on in the project is maintaining three lanes in each direction along I-90; eastbound and westbound, there will be a total of six lanes available. We've made a commitment to maintaining Soldiers' Field Road as well. At the same time, we need to demolish all of the existing I-90 viaduct that there's now. I'm sure some of you are familiar with taking I-90 in and out, you've probably become immune to it, but there are over 2,000 feet of elevated structure that's currently over the commuter rail. For us to be able to demolish that while constructing new rail at the same time at different levels and alignments, is a significant undertaking that we need to accomplish. We've been struggling and striving to find ways to construct this with the least and minimal amount of disruption along the commuter rail. We've acknowledged the fact that there will be times, we don't know the durations yet; we're striving to minimize those as much as we can, but there will be times when we have to go to single-track operation.

We've discussed this with the Worcester working group, the various Taskforce members as well, as to how is the best way to approach minimized the amount of single-track operations that

would need to be undertaken while we're doing reconstruction and demolition. If we do, for the duration that we need to, from Boston Landing to where the Boston University Bridge crosses over the commuter rail track, we would go single-track operation. That is approximately 3,000-3,500 feet. There would be a delay, but to the extent that we can minimize that delay. We're going to put in the easiest and most versatile switches that we can between Boston Landing and Boston University. We could facilitate the speeds through there to get the commuter rail, thereby lessening the amount of delay to withstand during the commute inbound or outbound. It's been modeled by Mark Shamon of VHB to see what that impact would be; the range of one and a half to two minutes is what we're anticipating.

To the extent that we can find other ways to reconstruct this project and maintain all of the traffic that I previously mentioned, we want to maximize that two-track option as much as possible. There will be delays; we don't know the extent of how long it is. As Melissa and Mark had said earlier, we are very early on, and we're still in conceptual phasing trying to identify where the benefits are and minimize disruption.

As far as what are going to be the impacts on development, we recognize that. That's one of the reasons why we want to make sure that the residents of Framingham as much as any other community between here and South Station, that either is using I-90 or the commuter rail, will have the ability to be able to commute back and forth. To the extent we can, we don't want to double the pain by restricting traffic on I-90 while we're also restricting commuter rail traffic as well. To the extent we can phase the project, so you're maintaining two tracks of the commuter rail, while you've disrupted I-90 and vice versa, we can maximize the amount of space available on I-90 in the time frame by which we're actually minimizing the availability of two-track operations on Worcester/Framingham – that's our intent. It's not going to be easy. We're asking for your indulgence because it's going to be painful and an inconvenience. On a project of this magnitude, with a significant amount of undertaking for utilities, relocations, and complete reconstruction of a new station, it's, unfortunately, the pain that we're all going to have to endure.

Regarding the neighborhood connections, you bring up a good point. One of the issues that we were contending with, with the at-grade option, is that there would be significantly less parkland created and there would be permanent impacts on the waterways as well. We have always strived in any of our alternatives that are being investigated in this particular area is to avoid and permanent filling impacts in the river. As Mark had pointed out, there is 210 feet to integrate and accommodate all of the transportation uses and infrastructure. The two commuter rail lines going into Back Bay, two future tracks for Grand Junction crossing over I-90 going

towards Kendall Square and North Station, eight lanes on I-90, four lanes on Soldiers' Field Road, and expanding and enhancing the park space and recreational uses along the Charles River. To accommodate all that at that at-grade, meant that we had to drop everything down. It forced us to get close and ultimately into the waterway on a permanent basis. That was already having taken account for a donation of land that Boston University was prepared to give. We've maximized our availability of space going to the south. It forces us to be able to look and stretch out, and it brought us closer to the river. It's an impact that the Secretary of Environment and Secretary of Transportation were not prepared to accept. That was another drawback.

As far as being able to provide connections, there are future connections. There is potential for future connections. Which ones are the strongest or weaker? You'll hear discussions of the Agganis Crossing. Agganis Crossing is something that we're accommodating for in the concept that you see if identified as preferred for MassDOT. That is something that is being discussed for future improvements and add-ons. What we're doing now is providing the accommodations to ensure that we're not precluding the ability to construct that at some point in the future.

C: Rick McKenna, Framingham Resident: You were discussing potential delays, and I'm wondering about the addition of West Station and its impact on the travel time from Framingham into Boston. Even if it were a five-minute stop, you add the time for deceleration and acceleration afterwards; it seems like no matter what, you're just going to add train time versus the drive time in the city. On top of what Mary was saying, we have close to 2,000 units currently being built and the project will end in 2030. If Framingham continues focusing on transit-oriented development, specifically downtown, we could have another 2,000-5,000 units that could potentially be 1,000 new commuters. Is it going to be like the Big Dig? When it was done, it was already antiquated. By the time we have the two trains, and the additional station and more commuters.

C: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT: It's a great point. I'm sure you've witnessed this if you're on the commuter rail each day. Over the last three to four years, there's been a 50% increase in passengers and trips on the Worcester/Framingham Main Line. We've gone somewhere in the range of 12,000 in 2014-15 to 18,000 traveling passengers on a regular basis. As you just mentioned, it's likely to grow with the development that's been going on in all of the towns between Worcester and South Station.

You'll see in the three alternatives for West Station in the Scoping Report. There is the original proposed location of the station in the DEIR; it was proposed to go over the two Worcester Main Line tracks. Minor changes in alignment over where the current track operation is – it worked

fine. It was maintaining all of the existing alignments; it meant that if it was an express train and not a local train; you could go through the station with minimum slowdown, still on the same tangent run going in and out of Boston. Harvard proposed an alternative to that. All of the land that we've talked about in the scope area is owned by Harvard University, everything that you see in green. MassDOT operates all of its transportation networks. Of the approximately 100 acres in present form, there will be around 40 acres for transportation uses built out as part of this project and roughly 60 acres remaining available for land development build out. MassDOT currently occupies a significant portion of that with I-90. Now, with the alignment of the existing I-90 where the old toll plazas used to be before AET was implemented, we're condensing that down.

We're making our transportation infrastructure better and your commutes better. In doing so, we're also opening up a significant area of land for development. The reason that I bring that to your attention is that Harvard asked if there was an opportunity for construction of West Station to not only provide services from commuters coming from the west that may want to transfer at some point in time, perhaps using the urban transit system over to Kendall Square utilizing Grand Junction — at the same time, easing transportation access to anybody that may be visiting or living in our development area. They brought forward a proposition, which they called the flip, that we looked at, and it didn't work. The reason that it didn't work was that it was penalizing commuters coming from Natick, Framingham, Ashland, and everywhere out to Worcester coming inbound. If you're a local stop, there wouldn't be an issue because you'd be stopping at the station anyway. If you're on an express service, there would be delays over the course of the day. On-time performance is a significant concern for Keolis and the MBTA when operating the commuter rail. They struggle on a daily basis now to maintain the 92% on-time performance rate. The delays were going to hinder that significantly. In the model runs that Mark's team ran, in many instances, was falling below 85% on-time performance. What that meant for the operators of the commuter rail is that the schedules would have to change to bring up the on-time performance rate to 94% again.

We said maybe there's a compromise where we can provide all of the services that are expected of MassDOT, commuter rail, and MBTA, but also provide a station that would be convenient and facilitate future development at that location while also accommodating all of the services for transit users and commuters that may want to stop at West Station. We proposed a modified flip. In the document, you'll see the original flip and a modified flip, which is the flip that MassDOT proposes. It maintains the two tracks that currently exist and operate out there; they could service express inbound and outbound tracks on a daily basis. It minimizes the amount of delay that commuters would have to suffer if you're on an express from Worcester or Framingham into

Back Bay and South Station. The modified flip is an option that we've been advocating for because it addresses the needs of our transit users and transportation needs; it also accommodates future users at West Station and transfers that may be taken in the future using the Grand Junction railroad and our urban transit system. That's why you'll see three options presented. The DEIR, the flip, and the modified flip or compromise.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH: So, everyone knows, this is the Grand Junction Line; it's the track that currently goes over the Charles River. It's currently used for non-revenue moves by the MBTA to move equipment from the North Station lines to the South Station lines. In the city, there's an idea that it could eventually be used for a subway-style service. It's not part of the project, but there's nothing in the project that would preclude it from happening in the future.

C: Mary Kate Feeney, Framingham Resident: Thank you for holding this. I always find out something new about this project. I just want to reiterate what Rick and Mary were saying about the train. The commuter rail is such an important thing. We're talking about the environmental impact study. I can't imagine anything that's more environment than public transportation. I find that this plan is so car-centric; it's so out of sync with talking about the environment. I was a small child at the time, but the Big Dig had a public transportation commitment in the Environmental Impact. Is that something that the Commonwealth is looking at? Is there a sense of what investments the Commonwealth is willing to make in the Framingham/Worcester Line, whether it is improving the tracks, adding more trains, adding more cars to trains? I am very concerned about going down to one track; I understand it, but I'm still concerned. I think we all read *The Globe* series about traffic last week; it shows that public transportation is a big problem in the Commonwealth. This is a great opportunity for us to be bold and come up with new ideas for transportation. I'm interested in hearing if the Commonwealth has made any commitment or is considering any further investments in the line.

A: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT: If you came to the meeting in July when we met with Framingham residents and officials previously, one of the things that I talked about then is ways are we trying to make it less impactful and inconvenient. One of the things that we're advancing forward is the procurement of more coaches – bi-level coaches to replace the single-level coaches currently operating on the line; there are already new locomotives. The idea is that by 2023, we will be able to operate all bi-level coaches on this line before significantly impacting construction begins. Secondly, is the idea of being able to provide nine coach consists, which I believe is somewhere between five to seven consists on a regular basis.

Those are two things that we're striving to do. The other things that we want to do, this is coming out of the ongoing studies, make the ride faster, and provide more services and trips in the course of a day. You'll see a lot of things, such as 15-minutes, 30-minutes headways. What can we do to have consistent runs and trips during the course of the day? I can't make any commitments to what the MBTA can and may be able to do once they have new coaches. How many coaches are they able to procure, the locomotives, the staff, and whatever other needs they'll have to provide those services? What I can tell you is what we're doing here is setting the framework to allow them to be able to make significant improvements in the future. That's why it was important for us to maintain the express tracks into and out of Boston so they will be able to meet on time performance standards and keep the riders they have and attract new ones. There are many improvements that our rail group is looking to make, but they're hamstrung by what they currently operate now. What we're doing will assist them.

C: Doug Lawrence, Economic Development Corporation of Framingham: I'm with the Economic Development Corporation of Framingham and also involved in the MetroWest Life Sciences Network. I'm excited about the potential for this project. That part of Boston is going to be great at the end. I'm concerned that the price that the MetroWest region may pay for a very long time under the current plan. I would encourage you to keep looking at the plan and find ways to continue to improve it. I'm glad to hear what you're saying about the express line; I understand that, and it makes a lot of sense. Even so, I feel we'll be paying a heavy price for ten years. Even at the end of the project, the improvement that we'll see will be relatively minor coming from the west. Perhaps, you should be looking at the scoping part of this project and add something to it that's more beneficial to those of us who live to the west.

One of our strategies here to grow the health of this region is to attract life sciences companies. It's very interesting to them to be able to connect the brainpower in Cambridge to the manufacturing and operational environment here in MetroWest. If we make it difficult to get back and forth, we're going to pay a big price. On the other hand, if we're able to get that connection earlier, it could be a tremendous asset, a payoff, it could more worth it to us here in MetroWest to go through this difficult period. The other thing that I would suggest is to look at the rail line. I'm glad we're looking at increasing the capacity of the individual trains that are running, but my understanding is electrification could double the capacity of each track because we'd be able to run trains much faster, accelerate in and out of the stations and get to the city faster.

I realize that it's a big project, but why not electrify that line sooner so we can get the benefit and see the movement that we want from cars to rail because it's more convenient during this

project. Finally, we talked a lot about commuting. There's this trip into Cambridge and out during the day for meetings, and there's also access to the airport. We have major corporate headquarters in this region. If we make it difficult for ten years to do international travel that top executives need to be able to do easily, we're really going to impact the ability to attract corporate headquarters to this region. The potential impacts, I think, are very significant. I would encourage you to continue to look for ways to mitigate the impact for ten years and give us a bigger payoff at the end in MetroWest.

- A: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT:** All of your points are on-key; many of them have been shared with us before. I urge you please, I urge everyone in the room tonight, to please put your thoughts in writing and send them to us. When we collectively look at all of the comments, it's going to help steer a lot of the decision making on the project. Each and every one of the points that you've made are on-key. We recognize the value. What we're trying to do now is account for as many things as we can see as improvements here – economically, connecting brainpower, and being able to make sure that corporate executives have the ability to get in and out of Logan International as quickly as they possibly can. That's an issue for us, not only in the long term but during construction during that seven to ten years. Those are issues that we're looking at on a regular basis right now that we will try to mitigate during construction. Whether that means we need to start looking at additional busing, identifying park and ride facilities, some way we're able to transit people in and out of Boston during construction to minimize inconvenience. Please write those comments down and send them in to us.
- C: Dennis Giombetti, Senator Spilka's Office:** Just to echo the previous comments; those were great comments, especially around the corporate community that we have here and how important the airport and Cambridge connection is to business equity. I know that the double-track express track coming in is part of the plan to save seconds on the route. I'm a little concerned about the lack of focus. I don't see a focused effort among improvements along the commuter rail for increased time. The goal is to increase capacity. You can increase capacity all you want, but if it takes an ordinary amount of time to load the trains, you're going to delay even more. Having a few seconds of the tracks in Brighton will be irrelevant because you're going to be adding 10-15 minutes on each stop loading on. I don't see any concrete discussion on the platforms so people can get on quicker. The Charlie Cards – the people movers, like Disney mentality, right? I don't see any of that thought here. I think those are critical steps to be made to increase capacity along the route. If we don't start doing it today, because those are two, three, four-year efforts procurement wise, you're not going to get those things on board until you're halfway through construction, which is going to be too late.

I'm a little concerned that there seems to be a divide between what you're doing and what the T is doing. I don't see those interconnections that make it happen. I think there are possibilities for those things to be dropped by different agencies if they're not coordinated, focused, and committed to. Those are some of the benefits that we can accrue at the end of the cycle while having the ability to be able to move people faster. When we do electrify the line, we can increase capacity even more because we have the infrastructure there. I think that's the critical thinking that needs to get done starting today — also, some of the design elements that Mary mentioned in the Brighton area. I think the sentiment of the MetroWest and Central Massachusetts is that this is a Boston-Brighton-benefit project and we're going to have the pain and suffering over a long period of time. Unless there are benefits over the long-term, we're paying for it. Any of those design elements in the area that help the MetroWest commuters go through on the road or commuter rail need to be designed into that project, so there are elements that we benefit from. I know that there are walks to the Charles River and connections over the Cambridge, those are all great benefits for Brighton. But those are all adding heartburn to the MetroWest commuters.

C: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT: Thank you, Dennis. A couple of things. My interaction with the MBTA on this project is significant; it's usually on a daily basis. As to how the MBTA is going to work with us so we can facilitate construction and address many of the points that you just made as far as disruptions during construction, Mark is probably in a better position to give you some more on that. The only other thing that I do know is that the MBTA is in the process of Automated Fare Collection (AFC) or Charlie 2.0. That's what the MBTA is currently undertaking and I was on the team that started working on that years ago. I could be wrong – I thought they were attempting to have it up and running around 2021.

The other improvements that you could probably speak better to, Mark, are the Newton stations platform and track facilities upgrades. Certainly, that's going to be of benefit to transit users.

C: Mark Shamon, VHB: We are coordinating all of those projects. In Newton right now, even though there are two tracks, they operate as a single-track because of the platform locations. The MBTA is making improvements, and that project will be under construction in about two years; it should be completed by the time our project is under construction. There are significant benefits there. I also know the MBTA is looking at a Worcester third track system, basically, a third track running from Framingham, into the Wellesley communities, and Route 128. That's going to allow for additional trains to come in and add capacity. We'll add capacity just by adding more coaches. The greater improvements will happen when the third track comes. In association with that project is the raised platforms for level-boarding. Those things are all being done over the next 10 years; the same time as our project. Coming back to the point of benefits for the local

area project, having the ability to get over the Grand Junction in the future is a potentially big benefit to people here, for those who want to get to the Cambridge side and have that connection. None of these are part of the project, but the MBTA is thinking about them right now.

- C: Dennis Giombetti:** My point is that it's about people moving. You can add capacity all you want, but unless people board and disembark quickly, there will be delays all along the route. I know Newton's improvements are coming, but those are two years out. You already have the design planned. Worcester and Framingham stations have done that. The lead time to get that done is very long. Unless you start doing that today, you're never going to have an impact on this project. We also need parking to increase capacity; there are a lot of people struggling to find parking spaces on the Worcester Main Line. None of those things seem to be in the works; they're being thought but aren't in the works. Unless it's starting to be worked on, we're not going to be on time and the project will be impacted.
- C: Mark Shamon, VHB:** The Worcester third track is going to put in raised platforms. I think that the project is going out for design procurement in the next couple of months. I don't know what the overall design and construction time frame is. I do know it's going to take a long time to build because, like this project here, it's going to have pretty large impacts and take a while to get done; to widen out where the stations are today and put a new track down, it'll take a little bit of time. I understand your point, and I'm sorry that I don't have a better answer. The work that's being considered right now and starting to go into procurement, eventually, will have the benefits that you're looking for.
- Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH:** Is there anyone else that hasn't spoken yet? Okay, back to Mary.
- C: Mary Connaughton, Pioneer Institute:** To tag onto Dennis' point about dwell times and platforms. The first place to start is Back Bay Station. There are so many people that board and unload there; it's a huge backlog. I get off at South Station, but we wait a long time at Back Bay tracks 5 and 7. They have some mini-level platforms for accessibility. Most of it is low grade and each conductor has to open up and let people go on the stairs. It's a packed station, so that seems to be a great place to start to get this train going faster.
- C: Rick McKenna, Framingham Resident:** Add to the economic impact. The commercial real estate analysts are looking elsewhere from Cambridge for a lot of the life sciences because of the cost and limited space, and the rates are high. They've been looking towards the suburbs, but their main problem in moving more stuff out of Cambridge is transportation. Not only out west, but the Orange Line and some of the other transportation issues. If they're looking at different

places and they're taking a look at what's going to be happening for the next decade out in the west, I think they'll stick with the bad Orange Line and go south or north. Also, with the problems, we see in the economic impact of bringing new businesses out here. I think, more importantly, maybe trying to retain the ones that we have because it's very easy for them to move. You've seen what's happened to Sanofi. We have Bose and whatever you want to call Staples and TJX. We've got to keep those because we can't let them go. That's another economic issue that I think we have to pay attention to. Hopefully, we don't have to start throwing out Framingham financial incentives to keep people and companies here because of a project that's going to benefit more people closer to Boston.

A: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT: It's an issue that we've run into on other projects where there could be significant impacts. We ran into it on I-91 in Springfield. We rebuilt the viaduct right through Springfield center and the potential economic impacts associated with disrupting traffic and taking lanes out of service on I-91. We've run into the same issue on Route 1, where we're reconstructing the Chelsea curves and the Tobin Bridge. One of the things that Nate has done on behalf of MassDOT is reach out to the major businesses that could be impacted, whether it be for the employees or retail purposes. There are ways that MassDOT can work to get the information out to those major corporate entities, firms, and employers and find ways to get the information to them. And, secondly, we listen to find out if we can make this less arduous for them. What things can we do? Are there times during the day that are better or worse? Are there weekends or not? What can we do to make their commutes better and make their businesses less impacted, as a result of the project that has to get done?

It has to get done because the 2,500-foot viaduct is significantly deteriorating. If we don't address that soon, we'll be faced with having to make emergency actions. We don't know exactly what they are, but they could be even more significant and delayed because we wouldn't have the ability to plan for it. We're trying to plan for the worst and hope for the best, as far as construction goes. If we don't do that, we're still faced with having to address a structurally deficient viaduct that carries over 150,000 vehicles every day and is directly overhead the commuter rail that carries 18,000 passengers every day. We need to act as soon as we possibly can. If we don't, we'll have to maintain the structure that we currently have. None of us want to be in a position where we have to act on that immediately because those phone calls will be ringing off of the hook as to what are the impacts of the delays associated with that emergency action.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, HSH: If nobody else has anything to say, I'll just wrap up by saying the scoping report is online. You can submit your comment by email if that's your choice. The

deadline is 11:59 PM on December 12th. You can submit it by email or by mail. As long as it's postmarked by December the 12th it counts. If that's everything, I wish everyone a safe trip home. Goodnight.

Next Steps

A public comment period of 37 days was initiated on November 6th and will close on December 12th to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the contents of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Scoping Report. Instructions on how to submit comments to FHWA and MassDOT can be found on the project website.

The I-90 Allston Multimodal Project task force will next meet at 4:00PM on December 11th, 2019, at the Fiorentino Center. The Center is located at 123 Antwerp Street off Western Avenue in Brighton.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Shannon	Alessondroni	Office of Representative Maria Robinson
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	HSH
Chris	Calnan	Tetra Tech
Mary	Connaughton	Pioneer Institute
Jack	Connisaw	Resident
Jim	Cerbone	MassDOT Environmental
Donny	Dailey	MassDOT Government Affairs
Jeff	Dietrich	HSH
Mark	Fobert	Tetra Tech
Dennis	Giombetti	Office of Senator Spilka
Ben	Gustafson	Commuter
Hannah	Kane	State Representative
Doug	Lawrence	Economic Development Corporation of Framingham
Jack	Lewis	State Representative
Patti	McCarthy	Resident
Rick	McKenna	ZBA
Ken	Miller	FHWA
M.	Morrissey	Commuter
Susa	Petroni	Media
Ken	Schwartz	Resident
Toni	Siciliano	Resident
Melissa	Toni	FHWA
Candice	Wesson	Commuter