

July 29, 2026 Public Information Meeting Questions and Answers

Powder Point Bridge Replacement Project

This document addresses questions received during the July 29, 2026 Public Information Meeting which the MassDOT project team did not immediately have answers to. For more information on MassDOT's Powder Point Bridge Replacement Project, please visit the project website:

<https://www.mass.gov/powder-point-bridge-replacement-project> or email the project team at: powderpointbridgereplacement@dot.state.ma.us.

Why does the existing bridge have to be closed for 3-5 years?

The proposed bridge construction, especially the foundation pile driving, will cause disturbance to the existing severely deteriorated pile foundations. Because of the poor condition of the piles, it is not safe to use the existing bridge during new bridge construction. It is anticipated that the existing bridge will be demolished before the new bridge construction is completed.

Will the project team inform the Town of the environmental permitting process?

The project team has provided the Town a summary of each of the anticipated environmental permits and approvals necessary to support the MassDOT-led bridge replacement design, and the associated agencies with a listing of each agency's respective jurisdiction. The process for many of these permits/approvals includes a period for public comment, and we will acknowledge which of these processes offer this in our summary.

When are we going to allow the contractor to drive piles? What time can this happen? What time can contractors drive through?

The work times established for the contractor will be a result of both the environmental permitting process and coordination with the Town of Duxbury and the Town of Marshfield. The result of this coordination will be available to the town throughout project development.

Why was the Sherman Bridge in Sudbury-Wayland, a wooden structure, able to receive significant timber in its replacement?

The Sherman Bridge is a timber structure over a freshwater river, and work on it is not a complete replacement – it is a superstructure deck replacement only. There are two relevant distinctions between the Sherman Bridge and the Powder Point Bridge. First, the current condition of the Sherman Bridge, due to more favorable environmental conditions, resulted in a determination that while the deck superstructure requires replacement, the timber piles and stringers are in relatively good condition and do not require replacement. This is not the case at Powder Point, where the coastal conditions have caused severe deterioration of the piles. Second, the Sherman Bridge is much shorter than the Powder Point Bridge – 112ft, vs. 2,200ft. Issues related to swelling and expansion of the deck timber are expected to compound with longer expansion lengths – resulting in issues at Powder Point that may not be evident at the Sherman Bridge.

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Are environmental concerns being considered during both the design phase and the construction phase of the bridge?

MassDOT's design for a replacement bridge intends to utilize materials specifically designed to withstand the rigors of marine conditions, and with an emphasis on minimizing potential effects on human health and the environment. As the design advances and manufacturers' specifications are further evaluated, MassDOT will have a clearer understanding of what specific materials will be available and suitable for the marine environment, and which precautions should be taken in selecting materials that either limit, or eliminate, the risk of chemicals leaching into the environment.

Could construction disturb any significant archeological remains?

The MassDOT Archaeologist has reviewed the Massachusetts Historical Commission's archaeological maps and has identified two recorded pre-Contact sites to the west of the bridge. In March 2024, MassDOT provided project information to the MA State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources (BUAR), and the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and the Narragansett Indian Tribe. No comments were received by MassDOT from these parties.

Soil borings performed by HDR within the project area revealed that the construction of the bridge and roadway approaches disturbed the natural soil deposits. The roadway approaches at either end of the bridge were constructed on 10 to 15 feet of elevated fill.

It is the opinion of the MassDOT Archaeologist that the project's Area of Potential Effect (APE) has low sensitivity for significant archaeological resources based on the impacts of previous roadway, bridge, parking lot construction and residential development. The proposed work detailed in the current 25% plans will be confined to disturbed and unfavorable areas within the existing bridge alignment, roadways and roadway layouts, beach access paths, and parking lots at both ends of the bridge. Should any unanticipated archaeological remains be encountered during construction, the Contractor will be required to stop work while the remains are evaluated, in accordance with MassDOT Standard Specifications, Subsection 7.23.

Would there be a consideration from MassDEP to audit the new proposed structure and determine whether it would be more damaging to the environment so it could fall under grant applications from the Wetland Protection Act? There is federal funding for wetland conservation projects. If the environmental boards say the new project is harmful, could an appeal be made to receive funding under the wetland act?

The proposed work will not fall under grant applications from the Wetland Protection Act because the scope of work aims to maintain, repair, or replace, but not substantially change or enlarge an existing

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and lawfully located structure or facility used in the service of the public, and aims to have minimal adverse effects to the environmental resource areas within the vicinity of the project.

How Can I Find More Information?

Please visit the project website below for more details, to subscribe to receive project updates, and to view the latest resources on the Powder Point Bridge Replacement Project.

Project website <https://www.mass.gov/powder-point-bridge-replacement-project>

Project email powderpointbridgereplacement@dot.state.ma.us