

Summary of Comments from the July 16, 2013 MPO Public Outreach Meeting on the Draft Amendment to the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Draft 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Program

A public workshop was held in Norwood on July 16, 2013 at 6 PM to discuss the proposed revision to the draft Amendment Two of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the draft 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Fifteen people attended the workshop. Staff provided an overview of the documents and the process for their adoption.

Comments focused on the Interstate 93/Interstate 95 interchange project in Canton. Many of the attendees support the project because they believe it would relieve congestion and improve safety at this location. Supporters are hopeful that the widening of Interstate 95 and the addition of the Dedham Street off-ramp would help reduce cut-through traffic on the arterial roads in surrounding municipalities.

The majority of attendees were more interested in the project's design details and construction schedule than in the programming steps. Attendees focused their comments on the design of the Dedham Street off-ramp, the widening of Dedham Street, and the Interstate 95 southbound/Blue Hill Drive off-ramp. Specific questions included:

- Shawmut Road/Dedham Street intersection – Will that intersection be reconfigured to allow tractor trailer trucks to safely turn into and out of Shawmut Road to access the industrial area?
- Many drivers now make U-turns on Dedham Street to access the existing Dedham Street on-ramp to Interstate 95 southbound even though there are barriers to discourage that movement. Does the new design address this?
- Will there be pedestrian access near the University Avenue transit station, allowing for pedestrians to cross under Interstate 95 and into the new conservation land and Blue Hills Reservation?
- Will the Dedham Street off-ramp be traffic-signal controlled?

Diane Madden, from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Highway Division, was in attendance and was able to answer the questions about the design. Outreach for the environmental process for this project started in 2008 and a public meeting was held about a year and a half ago. Many of the people who attended the workshop were also a part of that original environmental outreach. Ms. Madden addressed their questions associated with concerns from that outreach and noted that

they would receive responses to comments they submitted on the environmental document soon.

In addition to the questions taken at this MPO workshop, MPO staff received telephone calls several days in advance regarding design issues associated with this project—specifically surrounding the discontinuation of Green Lodge Street. The following input was received:

- Residents of the Ponkapoag neighborhood use this roadway to access the University Avenue transit station. If the roadway is discontinued, it would change a 5-minute commute to as much as a half-hour commute to the station.
- Many transit commuters park on Green Lodge Street near University Station. Will the parking be eliminated?

MPO staff and MassDOT staff were able to provide information to the callers about these issues.

People were encouraged to submit comments on the two documents prior to the comment period's closing date on July 23. They were also invited to the MPO meeting on July 25, when the MPO will consider the documents for approval.