



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
New England District

News release

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Public scoping meetings Dec. 2-3

Corps of Engineers to conduct environmental review of proposed South Coast Rail project

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, has issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and conduct public scoping meetings for the proposed Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (EOT) South Coast Rail proposal to establish passenger rail service between Boston and New Bedford and Fall River, Mass.

The EIS will be prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and with the intent to serve as a joint Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and NEPA document that will comply with the procedural requirements of both state and federal law and serve as a combined Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). The state's MEPA review will be conducted simultaneously with the NEPA process.

The Corps, in consultation with the MEPA office, is developing the scope of the EIS/EIR and is seeking participation and input from all interested federal, state and local agencies, Native American tribes, and other concerned private organizations or individuals on the scope of the EIS/EIR. Significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the EIS/EIS include: impacts to waters of the U.S., including vernal pools and other wetlands; cultural resources; threatened and endangered species; transportation; air quality, including greenhouse gas emissions; noise and vibration; surface water and groundwater; hydrology and water quality; and socioeconomic effects.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works has submitted an application to the Corps for an Army permit to discharge fill material

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South Coast Rail Project scoping meetings/2-2-2-2-2-2-2

into waters of the United States, ranging in area from less than one acre to approximately eight acres (depending on the alternative selected), including wetlands, incidental to the establishment of the passenger rail service.

EOT's stated project purpose is to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Mass., and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities.

The EIS/EIR will evaluate a range of alternative transit routes to determine the Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative (LEDPA). Alternative routes presently identified include four principal rail routes: (1) the Attleboro Alternative; (2) the Stoughton Alternative; (3) the Middleborough Alternative; and (4) the Attleboro-Middleborough Hybrid Alternative. A fifth alternative is a Rapid Bus Alternative using modified highway infrastructure. A No Build/Transportation Surface Management alternative will also be evaluated.

Public scoping may identify other alternatives for evaluation in the EIS/EIR.

Public scoping meetings will be held: on Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, Woodland Commons Building, 285 Old Westport Road, North Dartmouth, Mass. 02747-2300 (parking is available in lot #7); and on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Taunton High School Auditorium, 50 Williams Street in Taunton, Mass. 02780. Pre-registration for each meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. The public may also submit written comments at the meeting or afterwards.

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be submitted by Jan. 9, 2009 to Mr. Alan Anacheka-Nasemann, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division (ATTN: CENAE-R-PEA), 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751 or by email to SCREIS@usace.army.mil. Additional information is available from Permit Project Manager Mr. Alan Anacheka-Nasemann at 978-318-8214 or toll free 800-343-4789 or 800-362-4367 (if calling from within Massachusetts) or by email to SCREIS@usace.army.mil. The Corps public notice (file #NAE-2007-00698) can be reviewed at the Corps website <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select Regulatory/Permitting and search by file number or state. More information on the project proposal is available at the MAEOT website: <http://www.southcoastrail.com/>.

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