



Regulatory Program Fact Sheet

SOUTH COAST RAIL CORRIDOR

Boston - New Bedford/Fall River, MA

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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1. Project Information

Project Proponent: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Description: Proposed new commuter service between New Bedford and Fall River to connect these communities to the Greater Boston economic region.

Authority: The Corps of Engineers (Corps) is reviewing an application for a permit for the proposed placement of fill material into wetlands and waterways in accordance with [Section 404 of the Clean Water Act](#). The [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#) establishes the requirement that all federal agencies' permitting decisions be made with full consideration of the impact to the natural and human environment. NEPA requires agencies disclose these impacts to interested parties and the general public. The central element in the environmental review process is a rigorous evaluation of alternatives including the "no action" alternative. This can be accomplished through an Environmental Assessment or a more rigorous Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

2. Background/Issues:

- Joint federal-state Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) was published March 2011 and is available in local libraries. Public hearings were held and comments are being addressed.
- DEIS/DEIR focused on four principal alternatives. The Corps and MassDOT continue to work on further developing the information needed to determine the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative as required by the [U.S. EPA Guidelines for Specification of Disposal Sites for Dredged or Fill Material pursuant to Section 404\(b\)\(1\) of the Clean Water Act](#).
- MassDOT is providing, to the Corps, the technical reports which are necessary for development of the Final EIS and any additional information needed to address the state's requirements for a Final EIR.

3. Current Status:

- **Rapid Bus:** MassDOT completed additional study and presented results to us and cooperating agencies. The Corps and cooperating agencies agree that more information is needed. We have recently requested additional information on the rapid bus alternative.
- [Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act \(Cultural Resources\)](#): We provided a supplemental scope of work for intensive archaeological survey to MassDOT, which they are incorporating into a comprehensive cultural resources scope of work. Once we receive a final scope from MassDOT, we will forward it to Tribal and State Historic Preservation Officers as part of the ongoing consultation process.
- **Whittenton Route:** MassDOT is now working to obtain the necessary additional data to address this alternative at the same level as the Stoughton alternative.
- **Other Technical Reports:** MassDOT has submitted a number of technical reports, which we are currently reviewing. Other information required and not yet available includes assessment of secondary and cumulative effects, wetland mitigation options, and final information on alternatives.

4. Major Next Steps: Completion of the FEIS is dependent upon when MassDOT can provide the remaining technical reports including the cultural resources report, which involves weather-dependent intensive archaeology field work.

- Continue consultation with the federally recognized tribes concerning cultural resources which could be affected by construction in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Review additional data on Rapid Bus when available to determine whether it is a practicable alternative.
- Finalize review of all other technical reports
- Complete FEIS after all technical reports are completed (approximately 4 months needed)

5. Future Actions: A Record of Decision, not less than 30 days after the FEIS, will need to be completed and state approvals issued prior to a permit decision being made by the Corps.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT
696 VIRGINIA ROAD, CONCORD, MA 01742-2751
<http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>

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