



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**Massachusetts Division**

February 13, 2013

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In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-MA

Mr. Thomas F. Broderick, P.E.  
Chief Engineer, Highway Division  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116

***Subject: Wellesley to Randolph – I-93/I-95 Add-A-Lane Project, Bridge V Contract Segment  
NEPA Re-evaluation and Programmatic Section 4(f)***

Dear Mr. Broderick:

Thank you for the information provided on December 4, 2012 and January 30, 2013 for the work to be performed under Bridge V contract, which covers the segment of I-95 from Wellesley to Needham. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) previously provided information, including a summary of changes, on March 4, 2011 as part of a previous Re-evaluation. At that time, we requested more information before making a final determination for Bridge V contract to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This Re-evaluation was necessitated by the additional design and analyses conducted since the issuance of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in 1998, and previous Re-evaluations made in 2002 and 2011.

The work included in the Bridge V contract is the last phase of the I-93/I-95 Add-A-Lane Project, and will widen I-95 from a three-lane cross section to a four-lane cross section. We note that some of the changes related to the shift in alignment from the original design will result in fewer wetland impacts than previously anticipated. MassDOT worked closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to finalize the project mitigation, which will be located on a parcel owned by the Town of Needham. The parcel will be conveyed to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for permanent preservation and incorporation into Cutler Park. Other parcels owned by MassDOT will be conveyed to DCR as part of the wetland mitigation plan for the project. As indicated in MassDOT's letter dated December 4, 2012, these parcels are not presently used or designated as a public park, recreation area, or wildlife/waterfowl refuge, and therefore are not subject to Section 4(f) protection.

The project, however, incorporates new components, including the construction of retention walls in certain locations to reduce impacts to nearby properties. These and other details about the proposed work come as a result of design refinements and more recent studies evaluating the project area, and are included in a summary of changes (containing 11 items) within MassDOT's

letter dated March 4, 2011. The added components, however, are not likely to cause significant environmental impacts to human and natural environment.

The Bridge V contract includes widening of the Central Avenue Bridge, which is eligible for listing in the National Register. The bridge was included on the "List of Nationally and Exceptional Significant Features of the Federal Interstate Highway System," and therefore it is not exempt from Section 106 review. The bridge will be substantially widened under the current proposal by extending, on both faces, the existing concrete rigid frame structures, and the elimination of the currently open median well between the existing bridge structures. Although the bridge's original exterior appearance will be recreated and some of the original elements will be retained, the modifications will cause an unavoidable adverse effect. The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurred with FHWA's effect finding, and entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to resolve the unavoidable adverse effect to the historic bridge. The adverse effect to the Central Avenue Bridge is also considered a Section 4(f) use, subject to evaluation. The Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation included with in this Re-evaluation has been reviewed, and we hereby determine that the project meets the criteria for the application of the Programmatic Evaluations for the Use of Historic Bridges, and that the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) resource. We also determine that there's no prudent and feasible alternative to the rehabilitation of the Central Avenue Bridge, which will cause an adverse effect to the historic bridge, and is therefore considered a "use" under Section 4(f).

In addition, as a result of the shift of the originally evaluated widening, and added auxiliary lanes, a noise analysis was performed. The analysis concluded that a new noise barrier will be added after it was proved feasible and reasonable to construct as noise abatement measure. Previous noise studies performed for the project were re-evaluated, and reaffirmed the need for abatement in those areas previously identified and for which noise barriers were included in the original design. One of the noise barriers (Saint Mary Street/River Park), however, will be changed as a result of comments received from the affected commercial property owners. The noise barrier will be shortened to continue to allow visibility of their properties from the highway. The noise barrier re-evaluation concluded that the noise barrier in this location could be shortened by 300 feet while meeting the cost-effectiveness index criteria, and will still provide noise abatement for affected residents.

Based on the information submitted, and follow-up communication with the Environmental Section staff, we have enough information to determine that the proposed changes under Bridge V contract will not likely result in a significant environmental impact, and therefore the FONSI remains valid for this section of the project. Please contact Damaris Santiago at (617) 494-2419 or at DSantiago@dot.gov should you have any comments or questions.

Sincerely,



Pamela S. Stephenson  
Division Administrator

Enclosures: Signed Programmatic Section 4(f) Sheet

cc: Kevin Walsh, MassDOT  
James Cerbone, MassDOT  
Lawrence Cash, MassDOT

## PROGRAMMATIC SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Pursuant to Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966,  
49 USC 303 and 23 USC 138

Widening of the Central Avenue Bridge (Bridge N-04-022)

Based upon the attached information:

1. I have determined that the project meets the applicability criteria set forth in the PROGRAMMATIC SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION FOR FHWA PROJECTS THAT NECESSITATE THE USE OF HISTORIC BRIDGES.
2. I have determined that all alternatives set forth in the Findings section of the PROGRAMMATIC SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION FOR FHWA PROJECTS THAT NECESSITATE THE USE OF HISTORIC BRIDGES have been evaluated and that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the rehabilitation of Bridge N-04-022, I-95 over Central Avenue.
3. I have determined that the project complies with the Measures to Minimize Harm section of the PROGRAMMATIC SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION FOR FHWA PROJECTS THAT NECESSITATE THE USE OF HISTORIC BRIDGES and assure that these measures will be implemented.



Richard J. Marquis  
Assistant Division Administrator  
Massachusetts Division  
Federal Highway Administration

2/13/2013

Date