



**TOWN OF HOPKINTON**  
**TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE**  
Norman Khumalo  
Town Manager

March 31, 2015

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

**Re: EEA#15334 – I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvements Project – Environmental Notification Form**

Dear Mr. Beaton:

The Town of Hopkinton is in receipt of an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) filed for the I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvements Project by MassDOT. The Town has participated in this project in conjunction with surrounding towns via the 495/MetroWest Partnership. The Town is familiar with the feasibility studies which have identified the problems and through which several alternative solutions were developed, three of which are proposed in the ENF.

The Town's major concerns with respect to this interchange revolve around the impacts of the no-build scenario. For example, the Town averages 100 emergency (fire and ambulance) calls to I-90 and I-495 per year at the present time. If no safety improvements are made as the traffic volume continues to increase, the Town foresees that the number of incidents will rise, causing us to increase our response capacity and the budgetary impact which this represents. The Town is pleased that the safety problems inherent in the current interchange design are being studied and solutions are being proposed.

The Town has no major concerns with the three conceptual designs that are proposed, and looks forward to further design and analysis of these alternatives. As the alternatives are developed and evaluated, the Town recommends that the following issues be considered:

1. **The environmental impacts** – The area is within the Cedar Swamp ACEC, and the wetland resource areas in particular may be negatively impacted by the project depending on the design. All three alternatives appear to have significant wetland impacts which would require a variance from the Wetland Protection Act Regulations. Mitigation should be a key component in the review of alternatives.

2. **Noise impacts** – There are residential neighborhoods adjacent to the interchange. The project should provide appropriate noise and visual mitigation for residents.
3. **The no-build problem** – If improvements to the interchange are not significant enough, economic development in the region may suffer as employers avoid the congested area by locating elsewhere, public safety may become an issue with an increase in both passenger vehicle and truck accidents, air quality may worsen if traffic congestion results in stopped traffic with more idling, and there may be local roadway and congestion impacts as drivers avoid the highways by using local roads as bypass routes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the project.

Sincerely,



Norman Khumalo  
Town Manager

cc: Renata Welch, MassDOT Highway Division,  
Environmental Services Section