



SOUTH COAST RAIL



[www.mass.gov/southcoastrail](http://www.mass.gov/southcoastrail)

## Army Corps Releases DEIS and MassDOT Names Preferred Corridor

The US Army Corps of Engineers and MassDOT released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/DEIR) for public review on March 21, 2011. The Corps is conducting two public hearings on the document and—along with the state—will accept public comment during a combined federal and state comment period until May 27, 2011. See the box on page 3 for information on the hearings and civic engagement process.

Based on the data and studies in the report, MassDOT has identified the Stoughton family of alternatives as the Commonwealth's preferred corridor for the South Coast Rail project. While the Corps has not identified the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), MassDOT has identified its preference to facilitate state review under MEPA (the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act). Public review during the comment period will inform the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). After the close of the comment period, the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs will issue a Certificate outlining the required scope of study for the FEIR based on public and agency input, including consultation with the Corps.

In MassDOT's view, the Stoughton alternatives can be permitted and adequate mitigation can be provided, particularly for impacts to wetlands, wildlife habitat, rare species and water quality. Although the Stoughton corridor would have environmental impacts, it provides the greatest transportation benefits and—unlike the other corridors—fully meets the project purpose. The Stoughton corridor

alternatives are practicable because they can be built taking into consideration cost, existing technology and logistics in light of overall project purpose.

## The DEIS/DEIR

The DEIS/DEIR is a combined federal and state document that looks at alternatives for restoring transit service to the South Coast. It assesses the potential impacts of eight alternatives in four corridors on environmental resources, the built environment, visual and aesthetic resources, environmental justice communities and other factors.

MassDOT and the Corps coordinated their efforts to produce one joint federal and state document. MassDOT adopted the draft federal document—the DEIS—as its required Draft Environmental Impact Report—DEIR—with some additions. MassDOT prepared the preface, which names its preferred family of alternatives, and the responses to comments received on the Environmental Notification Form, which was filed by MassDOT in November 2008.

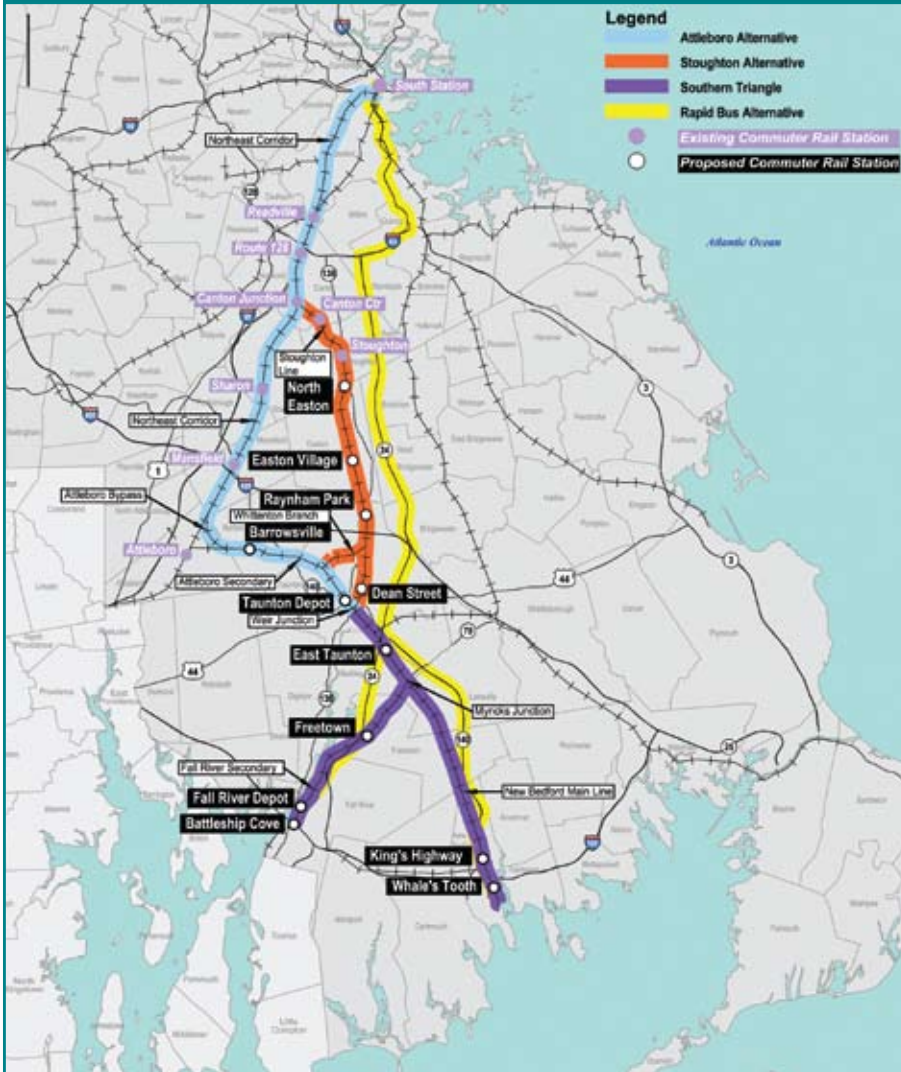
The DEIS/DEIR is in two volumes with more than 2,500 pages of text and graphics. The appendices are

## Where to find the DEIS/DEIR

Copies of the DEIS/DEIR are available for review in a number of formats and locations:

- On the Army Corps of Engineers website: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/southcoastrail.htm> and the South Coast Rail website: [www.mass.gov/southcoastrail](http://www.mass.gov/southcoastrail).
- At libraries in communities from the South Coast to Boston (see a full list on the project website: [www.mass.gov/southcoastrail](http://www.mass.gov/southcoastrail)). DVDs will also be available in 13 other libraries.
- By request: a DVD, Executive Summary or print copy by calling or sending an email to Charlie Patton, (617)357-5772 or [cpatton@reginavilla.com](mailto:cpatton@reginavilla.com).

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## The Preferred Corridor

The map on the left shows the alternatives that were studied in depth in the DEIS/DEIR. MassDOT believes the investigation and data show that the Stoughton Alternatives (electric and diesel modes) best meet the project purpose of more fully meeting the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts, to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in affected communities. MassDOT believes this family of alternatives best balances transportation and environmental benefits with environmental impacts.

Some people have voiced environmental concerns about the Stoughton Alternatives, particularly because this corridor crosses the Hockomock Swamp ACEC on an historic railroad bed that is no longer used by trains. MassDOT has looked closely at these environmental issues and has incorporated a trestle into the design to minimize impacts to wetlands and wildlife. Mitigation will need to be provided, particularly for impacts to wetlands, wildlife habitat, rare species and water quality.

in an accompanying DVD. There are many color figures, charts and tables in the report. MassDOT is making available stand alone copies of the Executive Summary, which are available with or without this full document on DVD. MassDOT has also produced a guide to the document and this fact sheet; both are available on the project website ([www.mass.gov/southcoastrail](http://www.mass.gov/southcoastrail)).

The Attleboro Alternatives would operate on congested tracks shared by other commuter rail lines and Amtrak. The alternatives offer unreliable service and cause significant, cascading delays on other commuter rail lines. The Attleboro Alternatives also are significantly more difficult to construct and would have nearly double the amount of wetland acreage impacts as

## Where are we in the environmental review of South Coast Rail?

Federal Review Process	Army Corps of Engineers publishes Notice of Intent	Corps prepares DEIS	Corps publishes DEIS
	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2009 - Winter 2011
State Review Process	MassDOT files Environmental Notification Form	Secretary of MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) issues Certificate for DEIR scope	MassDOT adopts Corps' DEIS as DEIR and submits for review under MEPA
			Winter 2011

the Stoughton Alternatives. For these reasons, the Attleboro Alternatives are not feasible.

The Whittenton Alternatives—a variation of the Stoughton Alternative—would require a longer trip time, and correspondingly, provide fewer air quality and climate benefits because they would take fewer cars off the road (when compared to the other rail alternatives). These alternatives would also provide an inferior service to residents in Fall River and New Bedford who would have to travel longer to reach Boston. The Whittenton corridor would use an alignment through downtown Taunton that would result in 13 grade crossings in a 3-mile stretch of the corridor through downtown Taunton, raising safety concerns and increasing noise impacts.

The Rapid Bus alternative requires longer trip times and results in significantly fewer riders than the rail alternatives. The Rapid Bus option is also unreliable due to traffic delays.

MassDOT has not identified a preferred mode for the Stoughton Alternatives. The electric mode provides more transportation benefits and is more expensive to construct. Electric power has substantial transportation, air quality, and climate benefits, but would have marginally larger wetland impacts and greater visual impacts to historic resources.

## Next Steps

The Corps and MEPA office will be considering the comments gathered in public hearings and in writing. Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Richard Sullivan will issue a Certificate on the DEIR 45 days after the close of the comment period, May 27, 2011. The Certificate will outline the work to be done to prepare the FEIR. While the Corps does not have a similar process, the parties will consult before moving forward with the next combined document, an FEIS/FEIR. MassDOT hopes this document will be available at the end of 2011.

## How to Review and Comment on the DEIS/DEIR

The Corps will conduct two public hearings on the DEIS/DEIR. MEPA will participate. MassDOT will hold an open house at 5:30 PM before each hearing to enable interested parties to ask specific questions about the project.

**The public hearings will be held on:**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2011 – 7:00 PM**

**Qualters Middle School, 240 East Street, Mansfield, MA**

**Thursday, May 5, 2011 – 7:00 PM**

**Keith Middle School, 225 Hathaway Blvd, New Bedford, MA**

Registration for each hearing will begin at 6:00 PM on the dates and locations listed above. MassDOT will host an open house beginning at 5:30 PM.

The format and presentations will be the same at the two public hearings. Please contact Sally Rigione, [Sally.M.Rigione@usace.army.mil](mailto:Sally.M.Rigione@usace.army.mil) or 978-318-8237 with access or interpretation requests at least 10 days before the meeting.

The Corps and MEPA will accept written comments until May 27, 2011. Please send your comments to both agencies:

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Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)  
fax: 978-318-8303
- Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)  
fax: 617-626-1181 or via hand delivery.

For background information on the project, please visit [www.mass.gov/southcoastrail](http://www.mass.gov/southcoastrail).

Corps prepares FEIS

Corps publishes FEIS

Corps issues Record of Decision

Summer 2011

Summer 2011 -Winter 2011

Spring 2012

Summer 2012

Secretary of EEA issues Certificate for FEIR Scope

MassDOT prepares data for Corps' FEIS

MassDOT adopts Corps' FEIS as FEIR and submits for review under MEPA

Secretary of EEA issues Certificate on FEIR

## Whale's Tooth Design Contest

The City of New Bedford and MassDOT sponsored a contest to gather design ideas for the proposed Whale's Tooth Intermodal Station and announced the winners at an event on February 9 at the Whaling Museum. The design contest was announced in November 2010 in response to residents' interest in a station that reflects the history and culture of their city. The two winning designs are featured in the photos on the top right and below. The judges also awarded Honorable Mention to the following design features:

*Iconic Treatment of New Bedford's Character:*  
**Anthi Frangiadis, Archit8 Studio**

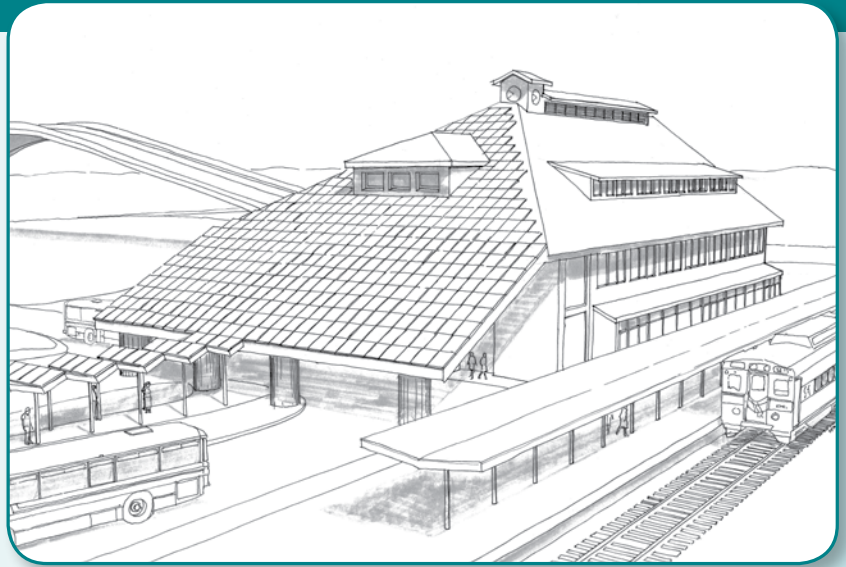
*Exploration of Circulation and Access:*  
**Robert Bichel and David Fredette, City of New Bedford Department of Public Infrastructure**

*Incorporation of Local Art and History:*  
**James Carney**

*Green Design:*  
**Edwin Sargent, AIA**

*Suspension Bridge:*  
**Jenna Storey, Wentworth Institute of Technology**

*Canopy Garden:*  
**Mark Warren**



An entry (above) submitted by architect Damon May, of South Dartmouth, incorporated south-facing solar panels on a "brawny" building reminiscent of historic New Bedford's waterfront. It was recognized as one of the Best Overall Designs.



South Coast Rail Director Kristina Egan and New Bedford Mayor Scott Lang listen as students from the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School accept their award for Best Overall Design Response. Patrick Grime spoke on behalf of the team, which included Jennifer Venevides, Catarino Pedro, Brandon Correia and Michael Cruz.



This model of a brick-and-granite station (above) designed by New Bedford students was inspired by Wamsutta Mills and the Butler Flats Lighthouse. It was recognized as one of the Best Overall Designs.

## Contact Information

If you would like more information about the project or to be added to the project distribution list for email and U.S. Mail notifications of meetings and other updates, please contact Kristina Egan, Director of South Coast Rail, by email at [Kristina.Egan@state.ma.us](mailto:Kristina.Egan@state.ma.us) or phone at 617-645-6704. Project information and updates, including a schedule of upcoming meetings, are posted on the project website at [www.mass.gov/southcoastrail](http://www.mass.gov/southcoastrail).

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