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## Photos: Conceptual designs of project to straighten Mass. Pike in Allston

Posted by Matt Rocheleau October 23, 2013 03:08 PM

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(MassDOT)

In the above conceptual design the light green areas designate a "bridge structure;" the dark green areas designate an "elevated roadway;" the yellow indicates an "on-grade roadway;" the brown indicates a "depressed roadway;" and the red/orange designates a "proposed local roadway network." To see a larger version, [click here](#).

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The state this week announced several major transportation projects, including plans to straighten part of the Massachusetts Turnpike that cuts through Allston and reconfigure exit and entrance ramps as well as some local roads.

State officials said the project will relieve traffic congestion and the pollution it produces, while opening up land for development.

The estimated \$260-million, multi-phase project is scheduled to start in fall 2016 and be completed by 2020, according to the state transportation department.

The state said it is currently considering at least two options, or "conceptual alignments," to straighten out I-90 and reconfigure ramps around the Allston-Brighton toll area, officials said.

The Pike's alignment and interchange configuration there was originally driven by the layout of the abutting Beacon Park rail yard, transportation department spokesman Michael Verseckes said.

But, a large chunk of land in the rail yard was freed up several months ago when railroad company CSX Corp. [vacated the property](#) to move its operations to Westborough and Worcester.

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As part of that move, CSX entered a purchase-and-sale agreement to sell the 80-acre rail yard to Harvard University, which, in its newly-approved master plan, says it hopes to eventually use the property as “enterprise research campus” space, but in the near-term will likely use the land for “construction support activities” as it builds out other projects.

Meanwhile, the state will maintain its transportation easement rights around the rail yard property, which will allow it to straighten the turnpike, preserve space for its commuter rail operations and reconfigure “the ramps and existing connections such that the area’s future development potential can be maximized,” Verseckes said.

State officials said they expect the pike straightening project will open up about 60 acres of land for future development.

The project will replace a nearly half-mile long, “structurally deficient” viaduct that includes 29 bridge structures built in the mid-1960s, state officials said.

“Right now, MassDOT is evaluating the condition of the elevated portion of the turnpike in this area to identify any and all deficiencies,” Verseckes said.

And, officials said it will reduce congestion allowing traffic to flow through the area faster, which will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks that often inch along as they try to travel there during rush hour.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation said its Highway Division will coordinate the project “with federal, state and city representatives and conduct public outreach with business, educational and other area institutions in the area.”

“In the next several months, MassDOT will be working with stakeholders and abutting landowners to refine the designs, identify any potential environmental impacts, and move forward with a plan that reduces congestion in this area by simplifying the roadway’s profile,” said Verseckes.

“The nearly 50-year-old Turnpike viaduct in Allston carries more than 100,000 vehicles daily and no longer meets today’s needs,” said a statement from the department’s Highway Administrator Frank DePaola. “This project will allow us to straighten the roadway, replace and reduce the length of the viaduct, and to better support and maintain the future all electronic tolling format at the interchange.”

Governor Deval Patrick [announced](#) the turnpike straightening plan and three other projects Tuesday: more details about the previously-announced plan to convert the turnpike to all-electronic, open road tolling; a \$1.3 billion project to replace and increase the capacity of Red and Orange Line trains, and to replace the Clayton Street Bridge in Dorchester.

For more details on the other three projects, [click here](#) and [here](#).

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at [mjrochele@gmail.com](mailto:mjrochele@gmail.com).

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(MassDOT)

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pjoncharles 10/24/13 10:19 AM

Absolute waste of money, even if they do end up getting rid of the tolls. how about spending the cash on fixing up the other roads that are in desparate need of it or maybe expediting the 128 debacle that seems like it has been going on for about a decade now and they seem lioke they're bascially working on the same sections of road over and over again?

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trueendurance 10/24/13 10:06 AM

Don't be fooled... Harvard is the one behind this project.

The Beast wants to grow... and nothing can stop it... Nothing, and no one.

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paarsec 10/23/13 03:46 PM

Why can't they push the toll booths even closer to the tracks to make it straighter?

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shadrach1 10/24/13 11:17 AM

As a part of the I-90 straightening and reconstruction of the Cambridge/Allston exit from the Massachusetts Turnpike, the state should also consider extending Babcock Street, Alcorn Street, and/or Malvern Street over (or under) the commuter rail tracks to connect with Cambridge Street in Allston. This would reconnect Allston with Comm Ave and greatly simplify pedestrian and vehicular transportation between the two neighborhoods, while providing new opportunities for mixed use development.

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cden4 10/24/13 09:14 AM

Wow this plan looks excellent. It consolidates the circuitous, messy ramp setup there now, creates new ramps that actually intersect with surface streets in a very urban way (no high speed merges), and creates a bunch of new streets in increase connectivity. This really cleans up the area around the Doubletree Hotel, making it much simpler, as well as where the current wide pavement is on Cambridge St with the on-ramps. This will be much easier to navigate for everyone and in particular

will be a boon for pedestrian and bicycle safety and access in the area.

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