



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chair
Karl H. Quackenbush, Executive Director, MPO Staff

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT MEMORANDUM: MAY 1, 2017

DATE: May 25, 2017
TO: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
FROM: William S. Kuttner
RE: Proposed Critical Urban Freight Corridors

Requested Action

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has requested that all metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in the state recommend roadways within their regions as designated Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs) and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs). After MassDOT accepts the recommendations, the critical freight corridor mileage will be incorporated into the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN). The current federal transportation funding authorization, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act requires that states and MPOs designate critical freight corridors for inclusion in the NHFN. Roadways comprising the NHFN will be eligible for federal funding that specifically supports the roadway freight system.

MassDOT intends for the CUFC and CRFC designations to be part of the statewide freight plan that currently is in development. To meet this timetable the Boston Region MPO released for public review an initial draft of proposed CUFCs on April 20, 2017. The initial draft has been revised, and now includes the CUFCs presented in this memorandum. The MPO board will vote on these designations their May 25 meeting. Please submit any comments to this proposal by May 22, 2017.

Proposed Motion

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization votes to recommend that the roadways described in this memorandum be designated as Critical Urban Freight Corridors, as indicated in the MassDOT databases, for inclusion in the National Highway Freight Network.

The NHFN

The National Highway Freight Network, which was established by the FAST Act, will be comprised of the entire Interstate highway system plus additional road mileage recommended by states and MPOs subject to approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). As a result of earlier federally mandated

planning efforts, some non-Interstate mileage, notably key intermodal connections, already is designated for inclusion in the NHFN. The FAST Act builds upon these earlier efforts by defining CUFCs and CRFCs, which states and MPOs (in consultation with regional stakeholders) will recommend for inclusion in the NHFN.

Massachusetts is permitted to designate a maximum of 75 roadway miles as part of a CUFC and 150 miles as part of a CRFC. The state is ultimately responsible for the choice of critical freight corridors, but has requested that the MPOs recommend roadway mileage for inclusion equal to their proportional share of the total state road mileage. The Boston Region MPO, which is almost entirely urban, was asked to designate 28 miles of roadway for CUFC designation.

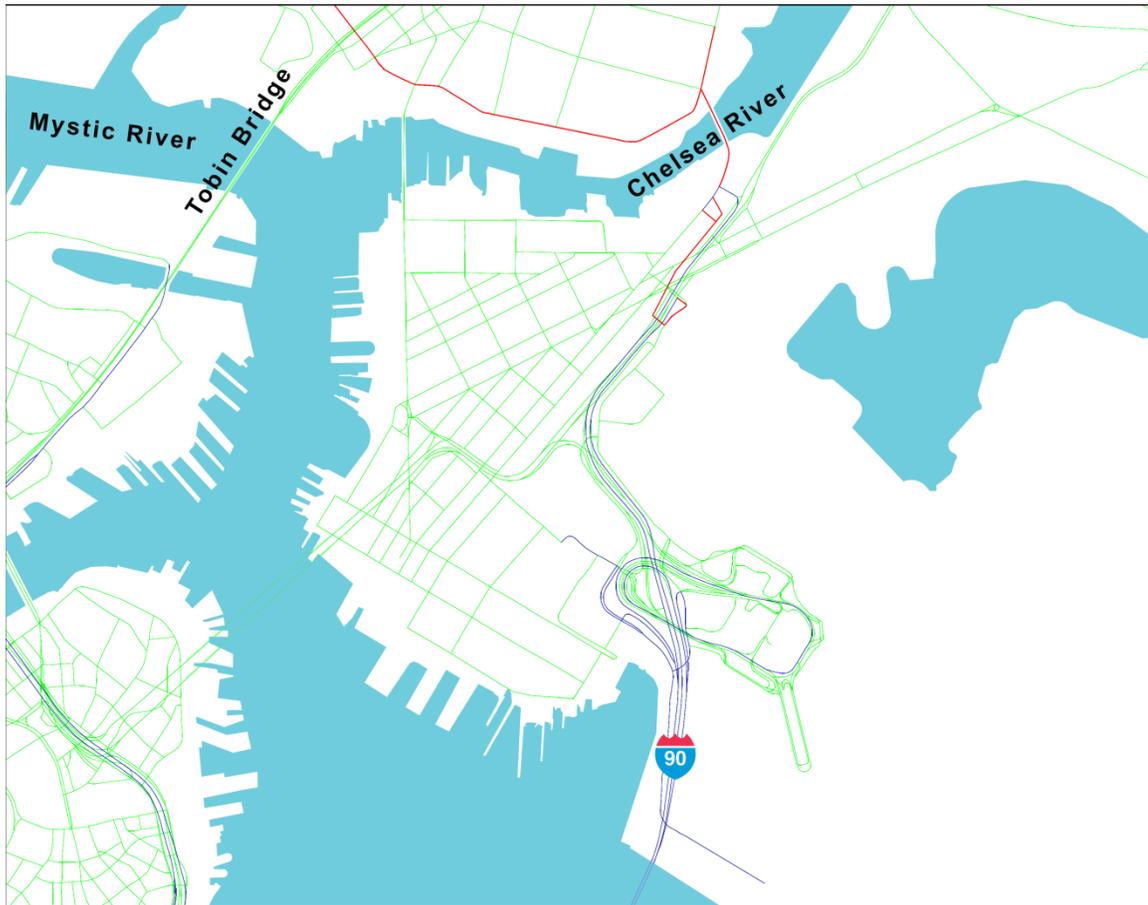
MPO staff—Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)—reviewed the federal guidelines and, in consultation with local stakeholders, identified roadways suitable for CUFC designation. This memorandum describes the CUFCs that MPO staff recommends incorporating into the NHFN. Roadways already designated for inclusion in the NHFN are also briefly described.

Using the CTPS Travel Demand Model to Depict the NHFN

The proposed CUFC miles are presented in eight accompanying graphics in this memorandum. Each graphic shows a portion of the roadway network from the CTPS regional travel demand model; and each roadway segment is highlighted in one of three colors:

- Purple:** Roadways already designated for inclusion in the NHFN are shown in purple. These include Interstate highways and intermodal connectors. Most connecting ramps and interchanges have also been highlighted.
- Red:** Roadways that are being recommended for CUFC designation are shown in red.
- Green:** All other network roadways are shown in green. These include all roadways with a functional class of “collector” or higher, plus any local streets used for fixed-route bus service.

Figure 1
East Boston Haul Road to the Mystic River

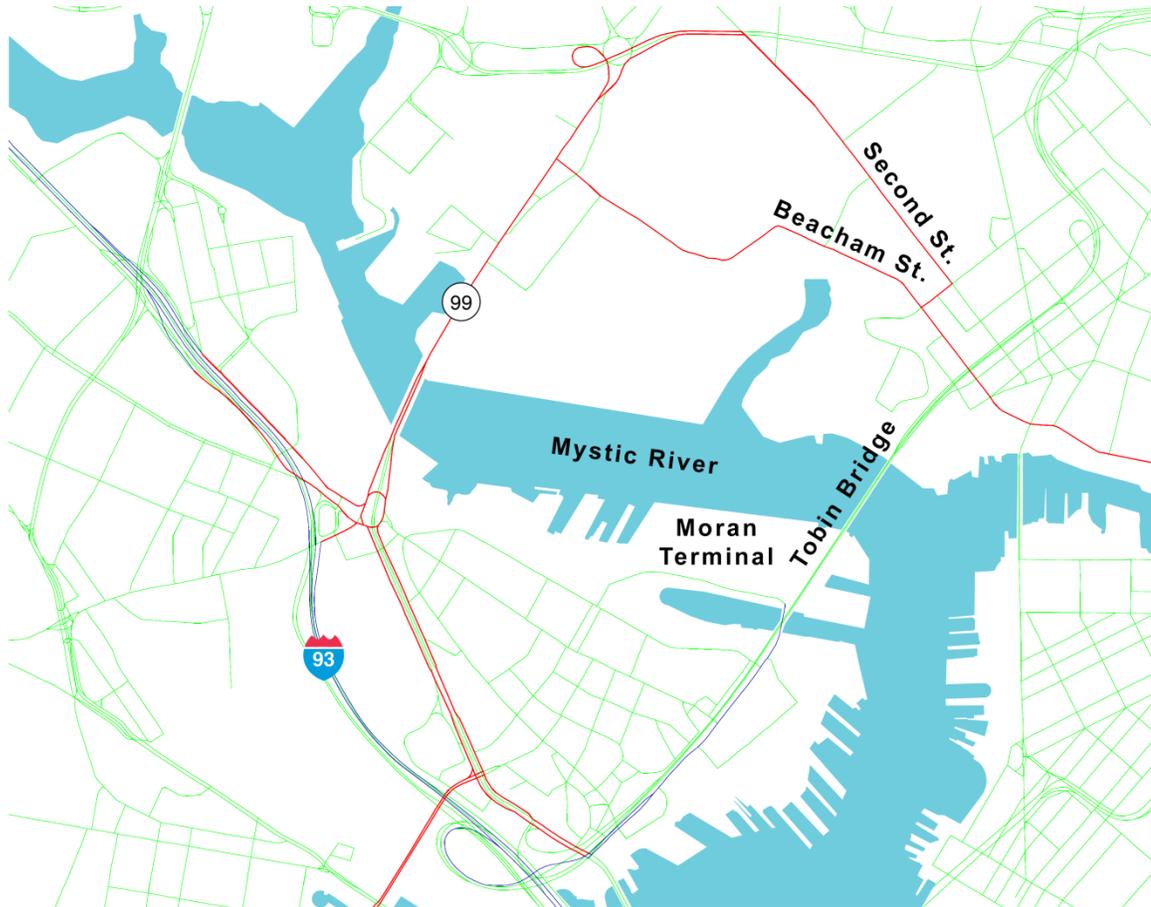


Interstate I-90 ends in East Boston near Logan Airport. Roads in or near Logan Airport that connect with airfreight and related facilities are already designated for inclusion in the NHFN.

The recently completed East Boston Haul Road, highlighted in red, is a short distance south of the Chelsea River Bridge. MPO staff recommends that this new facility be incorporated into the NHFN and that the currently designated freight corridor on Bremen Street be removed.

Proposed entirely new CUFC mileage begins at the Chelsea River Bridge, which is used by about 2,600 heavy vehicles each weekday. It serves industrial sites near the Chelsea River and then extends west through the Everett-Chelsea industrial area, and eventually connects with I-93 in Charlestown and the I-90 Turnpike in Allston. Figure 1 shows the route of the CUFC as far as the Tobin Bridge over the Mystic River.

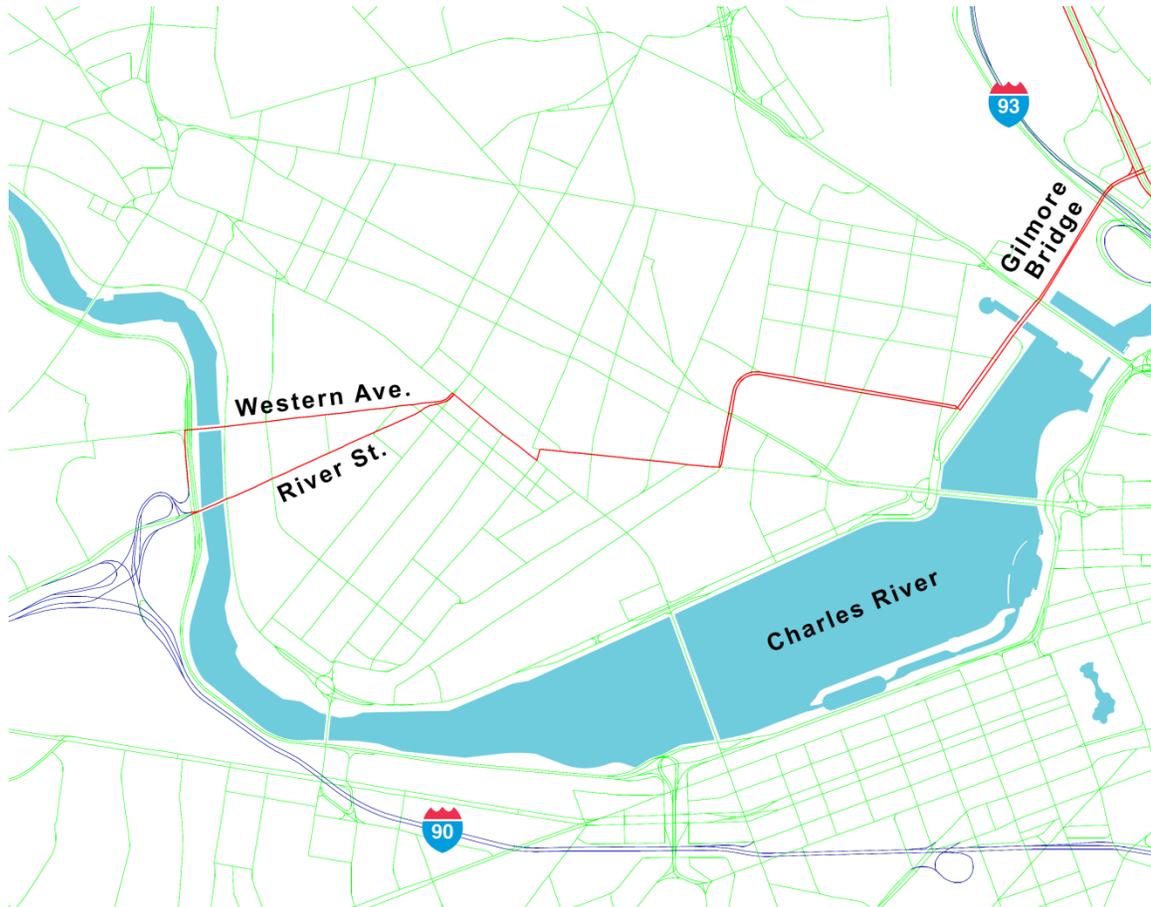
Figure 2
Everett-Chelsea Industrial Area and Charlestown



This CUFC continues north under the Tobin Bridge and enters the Everett Chelsea industrial area where it divides into two branches on Second and Beacham Streets. On weekdays more than 1,600 trucks use the CUFC at the Tobin Bridge, and more than 1,600 trucks also use each of the two branches. The CUFC crosses the Mystic River on Route 99, the only lawful harbor crossing for hazardous cargoes.

Figure 2 also shows the various entry and exit ramps where this CUFC meets I-93. At the bottom of Figure 2 the CUFC connects with an existing intermodal connector, which serves the auto import center at Moran Terminal in Charlestown.

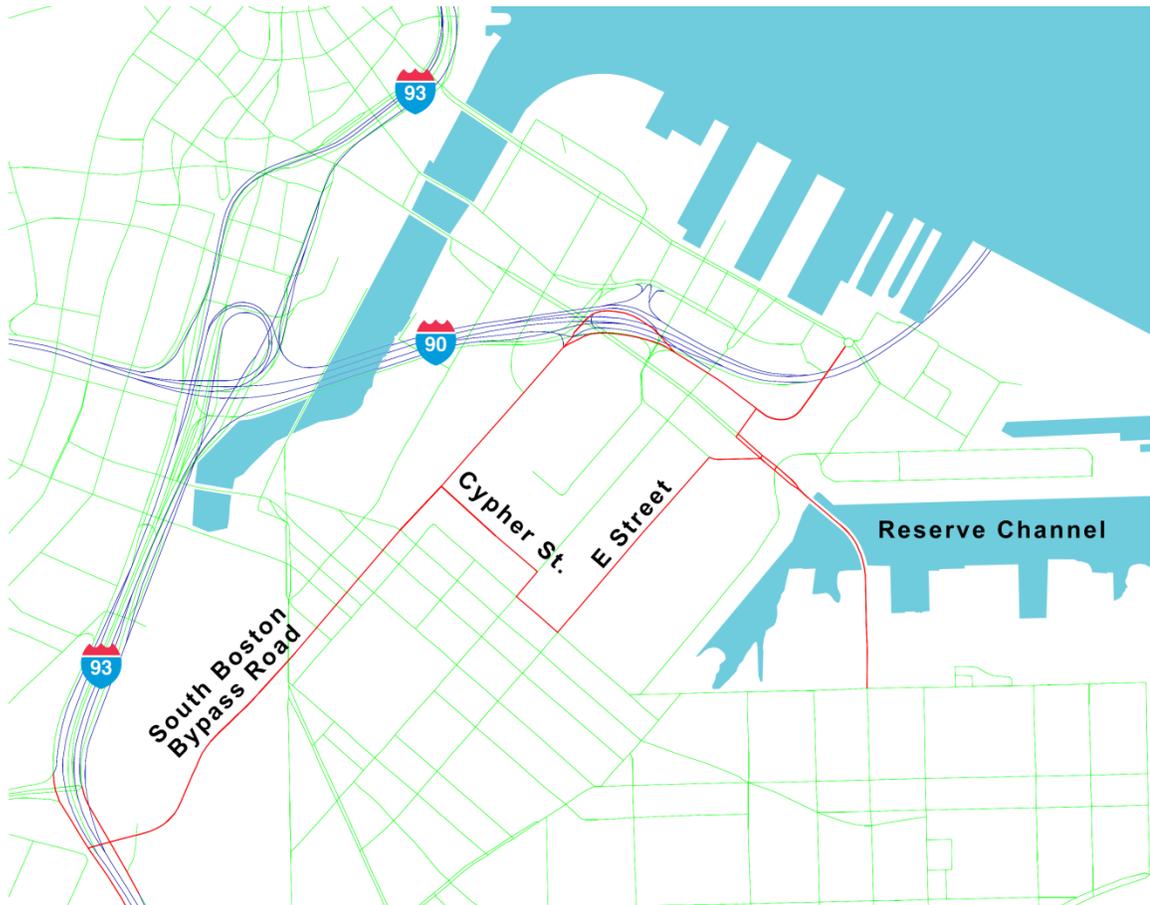
Figure 3
Charlestown to the Turnpike



This proposed CUFC traverses the southern end of Cambridge, entering from Charlestown to the east on the Gilmore Bridge and connecting to Allston in the west, with the Western Avenue and River Street bridges crossing over the Charles River. About a thousand trucks travel between Cambridge and Allston at the western end of this corridor. Truck volumes are slightly less at the eastern end.

The western terminus of this proposed CUFC is Interchange 18 in Allston, allowing access to the I-90 Turnpike. Much of this route has signs indicating that it is as a truck route and it is available for transporting hazardous cargoes, which are prohibited in the highway tunnels in Boston and under Boston Harbor.

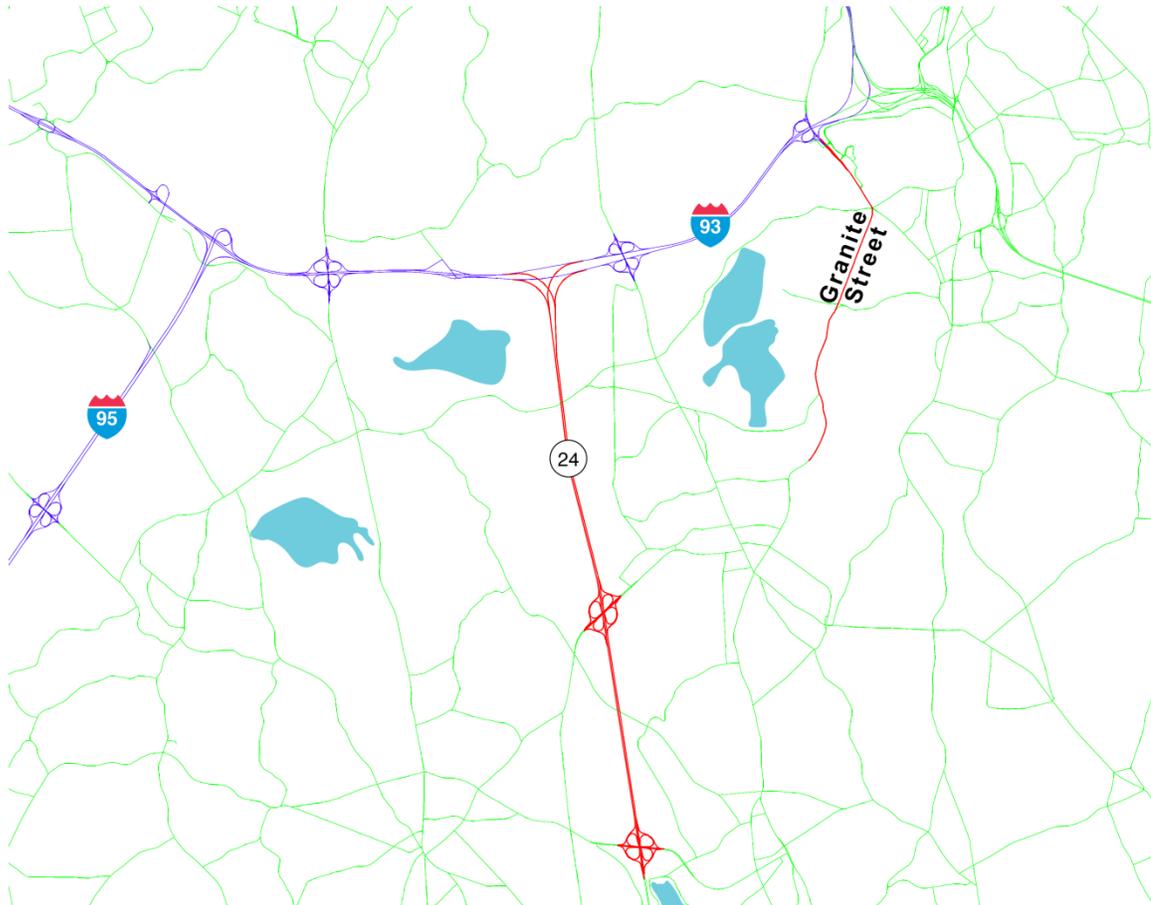
Figure 4
South Boston Waterfront



This proposed CUFC would connect industrial activity in the South Boston Waterfront with I-93. The South Boston Bypass Road connects with I-93, and is used by about 1,500 trucks each weekday. The eastern end of the proposed CUFC crosses the Reserve Channel to serve the Conley Container Terminal. About 1,000 trucks use this end of the proposed CUFC, most of which are ocean shipping containers.

A branch of this proposed CUFC uses Cypher and E Streets to allow trucks to avoid peak-period congestion where Bypass Road meets the I-90 ramps. Improvements to the Cypher/E Street route are being planned, which helps to justify its inclusion in the proposed CUFC system. The CUFC in Figure 4 includes only currently existing streets. When Cypher Street is extended from D to E Streets, the MPO can propose that the CUFC be modified.

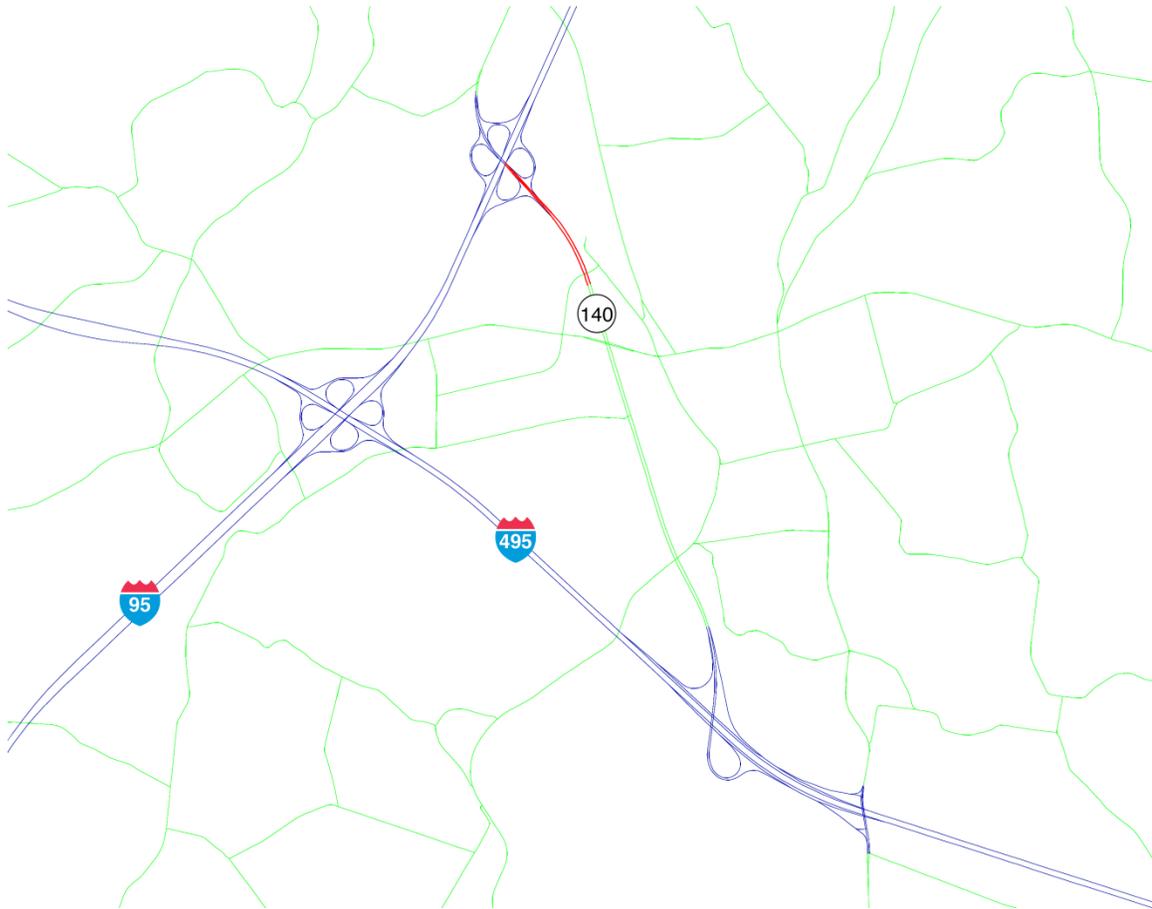
Figure 5
Route 24 and the Granite Street Corridor



Route 24 is a heavily travelled limited-access highway between I-93 in Randolph and the Rhode Island state line in Fall River. There are a large number of industrial sites and logistic operations such as warehouses, truck terminals, and motor pools located along the entire corridor. The northernmost section of Route 24, which serves industrial areas in the Boston metropolitan region towns of Randolph, Canton, and Stoughton, is recommended as a CUFC.

Granite Street connects with I-93 in Braintree at Interchange 6 and extends south becoming Pond Street and then North Street where it enters Randolph. There are several industrial parks along this corridor in Braintree, and a short distance into Randolph is the East Randolph Industrial Park, which is also served by active freight rail. The entire route between Interchange 6 and the entrance to the East Randolph Industrial Park is recommended as a CUFC.

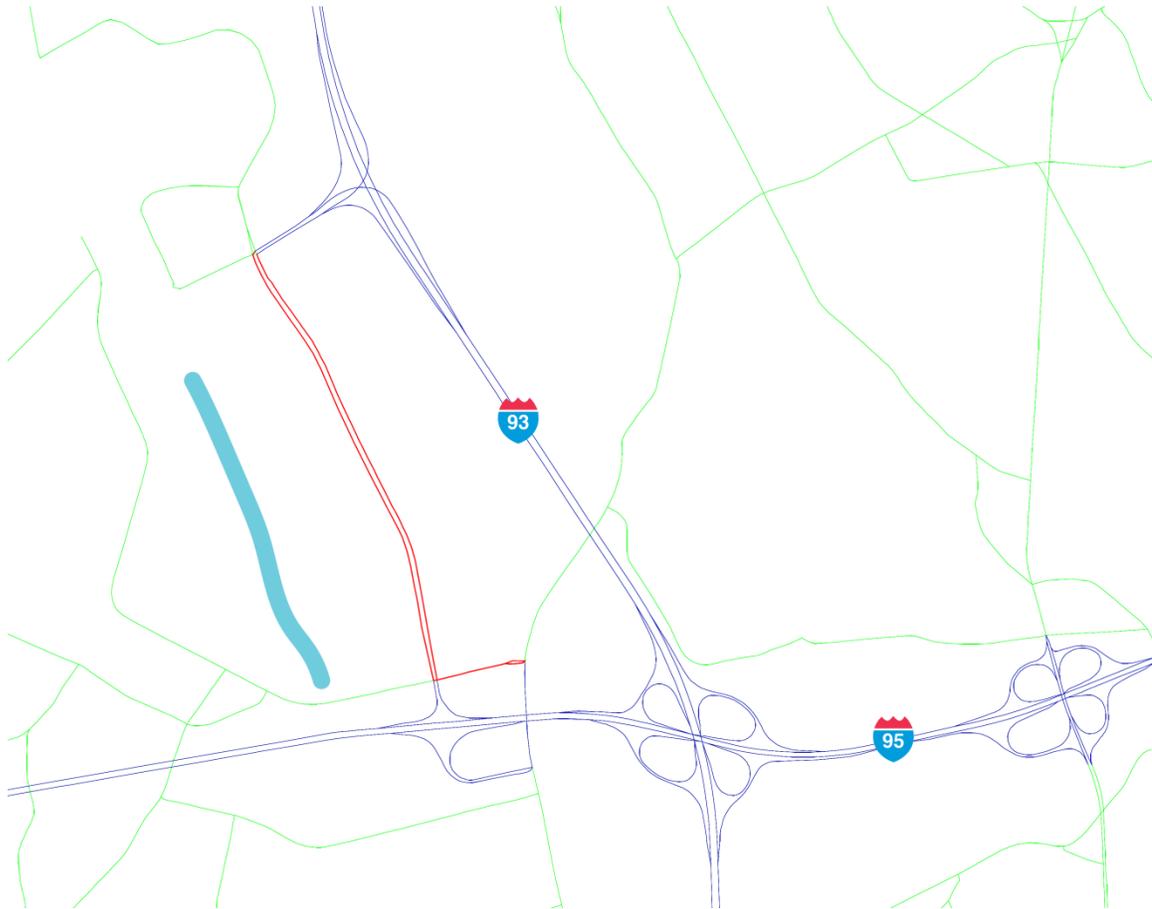
Figure 6
Route 140



A large concentration of industrial and logistic activity is located directly east of the interchange of I-95 and I-495 on the boundary of Foxborough in the Boston MPO region and Mansfield in the Southeastern Region Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). Active freight rail service complements and reinforces this area's industrial nature.

This area is connected to the two interstate highways by Route 140. The portion of Route 140 south of I-95 in Foxborough is proposed as a CUFC.

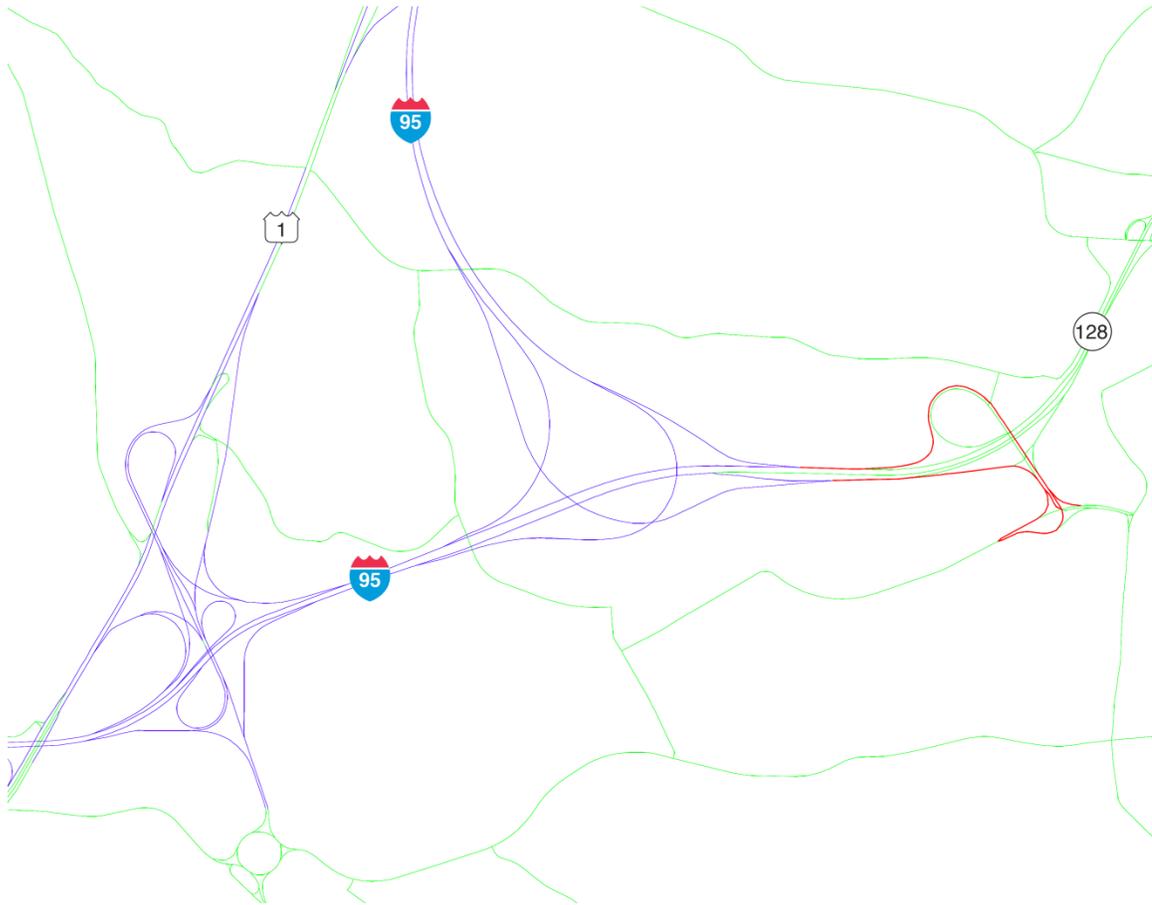
Figure 7
Commerce Way in Woburn



West of I-93 near its interchange with I-95 is an area with a large number of manufacturing, light industrial and logistic activities, some utilizing freight rail. Interchange 37C was added to I-93 in the 1990s to support continued industrial activity in this area and to serve the new Anderson Regional Transportation Center.

Commerce Way was built in conjunction with Interchange 37C, and connects this interchange with Interchange 36 on I-95 slightly more than a mile away. Commerce Way between these two interchanges is proposed for CUFC designation.

Figure 8
Route 128 in Peabody



Most of the original Route 128 circumferential highway is now part of I-93 or I-95, and these sections are now included in the NHFN. A small portion of the original Route 128, which is not part of an interstate highway, is proposed as a CUFC.

Route 128 branches away from I-95 in Peabody and continues as a limited-access highway to Gloucester. The greatest concentration of industrial activity along this part of Route 128 is near I-95 at Interchange 45. The section of Route 128 between I-95 and the Centennial Drive interchange is proposed as a CUFC.

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