



## Cape Cod Canal Bridges Replacement an Economic Necessity

### Summary

Replacement of the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges is an economic necessity to ensure safe and efficient travel to and from Cape Cod for area residents, workers, and visitors. The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce supports the recommendations of Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Case 3A in coordination with a timely replacement of both the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

After a decade of advocacy and study, we are reaching a pivotal point toward the modernization of Canal area transportation infrastructure.

In August 2018, MassDOT released recommendations for key roadway and multimodal (bicycle/pedestrian, park and ride facilities) improvements in the area of the Cape Cod Canal. Soon, USACE will release their conclusions in the evaluation of the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges.

It is essential that this momentum be carried into the next phases of permitting and funding, and that deliberate and expedient progress continues toward successful completion of this project.

### MassDOT Case 3A

The stated purpose of the Commonwealth's *Cape Cod Canal Study*, is to "Improve transportation mobility and accessibility in the Cape Cod Canal Area and to provide reliable year-round connectivity over the Canal and between the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges."

Of the seven alternative plans evaluated in this study, Case 3A was recommended as the option that would provide the greatest long-term improvements for accessibility and mobility to Cape Cod residents, employers, and visitors. This analysis assumes that USACE will replace both the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges with new structures located immediately adjacent to the existing.

MassDOT's recommendation, named Case 3A lays out a series of improvements to Routes 6, 3, 28 and the Belmont Circle area in Buzzards Bay that along with new bridges, would help to minimize traffic congestion during non-peak flow periods. It is not the goal of this project to create restriction-free traffic for maximum summer loads, but to provide safe and reliable transportation infrastructure for off-peak transportation into the next century.

### ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Canal bridges:

Oldest in Army Corp inventory

Rated "structurally deficient" or "functionally obsolete"

Narrow lanes create flow restriction "bottlenecks"

Traffic delays cost \$30 million in lost time during lane drops

Future repairs will include summer lane closures

Weight restrictions could be economically devastating

Our lifeline needs to be:

- ✓ Safe
- ✓ Dependable
- ✓ Efficient

The main elements associated with Case 3A include:

- Installation of an on-ramp connecting Scenic Highway westbound to Route 25 westbound
- Relocation of the Route 6 Exit 1C interchange
- Reconstruction of Belmont Circle as a 3-leg roundabout with signalized intersection
- Addition of a new lane on Route 6 eastbound to Exit 2
- Reconstruction of Bourne Rotary as a highway interchange

In April 2018 the Chamber worked to form *The Fix*, a coalition of community organizations and individuals to develop support for a proposed Mass DOT transportation improvement plan that will alleviate congestion in the Cape Cod Canal area. The coalition includes Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, the Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce, the Cape's 15 local chambers, the members of the Cape & Islands state representatives and senators, and members of the SmarterCape Partnership.

## USACE Major Rehabilitation Evaluation Report (MRER)

The Army Corps of Engineers, who owns and maintains both the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges is completing a study that evaluates the cost to continue maintain the existing spans versus total bridge replacement.

An MRER consists of four major components: (1) structural engineering, to understand alternatives (this includes major rehabilitation and/or replacement options); (2) cost engineering of the developed alternatives; (3) economic justification of the developed alternatives; and (4) environmental analysis of the developed alternatives. USACE launched this evaluation for the two bridges since the structures are both 85 years old and USACE cannot assume that they will be able to rehabilitate them in perpetuity. The final MRER will detail major rehabilitation milestones over the next 50 years for the bridges or recommend the replacement of one or both structures.

## Recommendation

Once the USACE has decided on its long-term plan for the bridges, MassDOT will initiate and prioritize the project development process for the capital projects recommended in the Cape Cod Canal Transportation Study's Final Report.

USACE and MassDOT must align the construction of these two projects in order to minimize impacts on the public and to maximize efficiency and minimize construction time.

The Cape Cod Chamber's mission is to support the region's economy, while being responsible stewards and preserving the sustainability of the Cape. To that end, we strongly support the decisions to replace both the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges with new adjacent structures, and the implementation of Case 3A to improve roadway and multimodal transportation in the Canal region.

*"It's not about getting more cars on Cape. It's about getting the people that live and work here and the goods and services that they require, back and forth safely and efficiently". – Wendy Northcross, Chamber CEO*

We urge the Federal Government and Commonwealth to develop and implement an aggressive timeline to complete permitting and clear the way for construction.

Lastly, we encourage both MassDOT and the Army Corps to work swiftly and cooperatively and move toward implementing an effective solution.

## The Issue

- The Sagamore and Bourne bridges are over 80 years old - some of the oldest in the Army Corps inventory.
- They are rated either “structurally deficient” or “functionally obsolete” and qualify for replacement under federal guidelines. They have no modern safety features such as lane separation, shoulders, and pedestrian or bicycle separations.
- The travel lanes are two feet narrower than modern design standards and cannot accommodate the same vehicle capacity as the adjoining roadways – creating bottlenecks.
- Increasing maintenance needs result in regular traffic flow restrictions. This is no longer a summer problem - Cape area residents are sitting in Canal area gridlock year-around.
- Cape residents and businesses depend on predictable and efficient travel over the Canal for their economic wellbeing, and safety during medical emergencies or natural disasters.
- Delays are hurting our residents and businesses through missed appointments, aggravation, pollution from auto emissions, and can cost an estimated \$30 million a year in lost time during repairs that require lane closures.
- Traffic backups spill over onto secondary roadways making getting around canal area towns difficult.
- “Posting” weight restrictions, when implemented, will impact the flow and cost of goods and services to cape residents and businesses.

## Background

- Sagamore and Bourne bridges built between 1933-1935 through the National Industrial Recovery Act, to replace a smaller drawbridge built in 1912.
- Decades of seasonal and year around traffic volume increases add wear and tear. Exposure to salt and chemicals leads to deterioration of the concrete deck and some steel members of the bridges. As a result, increased maintenance and major rehab projects become more frequent.
- During 2009, in the face of massive public outcry over multi-hour, off-season backups during construction work, the Canal Area Regional Traffic Task Force was created to build consensus on transportation needs related to ongoing traffic congestion at the two canal bridges. The Cape Cod Chamber was an original member.
- The 2011 Cape Cod Regional Transportation Plan proposes a study to focus on the future of canal crossing.

- In 2014, MassDOT created the Working Group for the Cape Cod Canal Transportation Study, of which the Chamber is a member. Funds and commissions transportation study
- 2016, Army Corps begins analysis of the bridges
- 2018, MASSDOT releases roadway and multimodal recommendations
- 2019, MASS DOT includes the Canal Area Transportation Study in the Capital Improvement Plan; Cape Cod MPO includes the study in its Regional Transportation Plan; ACE expected to release results of its bridge analysis

## Contact

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