

I-90 Toll Demolition and Roadway Reconstruction Project Elected Officials Briefing #4

Dear Elected Official,

We are happy to report that Stage 1 construction at all 23 toll locations has been completed well ahead of the scheduled completion date of November 22nd. All interchanges are now in their winter alignment (Stage 2), with traffic going over temporary pavement through the center of the demolished toll plazas.

The next phase of construction involves work on the outside of the former toll plazas. This will involve demolishing the toll administration buildings and any remaining toll plazas, building the final roadway with drainage work, installation of catch basins, lighting, guardrail, and installing permanent pavement.

There should be less impact to traffic during Stage 2, as most of the work will be during normal construction hours and on the outside of the roadway. The roadways at these locations have the same or more capacity than during the first phase of construction. But it is important for drivers to follow all posted speed limits in these work zones and be prepared for any temporary lane closures or shifts in traffic patterns as construction progresses.

All locations are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2017, but it is our goal to finish sooner. The more cooperative the weather is this winter, the faster construction will be completed.

We appreciate the patience of the public during the transition from manual toll collection and believe drivers have begun to see the benefits of electronic tolling, including fewer rear-end collisions at the former toll plazas, reduced traffic congestion (especially during the off-peak hours), and improved air quality.

Traffic Impacts:

There were no major traffic disturbances due to the work zones to report of. Congestion and volume were within their normal levels during peak commuting hours. MassDOT continues to monitor traffic volumes and travel times on a daily basis and will be paying particularly close attention in the days leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday.

It is important to note that the elimination of the toll plazas will not alleviate congestion associated with traffic volume at locations away from the former toll plazas, but we are already seeing some of the benefits of the project, and these should become even more apparent when the final roadway is built.

In the next report, we will be sharing a comparison of travel time data for pre and post construction activities to quantitatively assess the impact of removing the toll plazas.

All Electronic Tolling Activation and E-ZPass Distribution:

On Friday at 10:06 p.m., Massachusetts officially became a cash-free toll state when All Electronic Tolling was officially activated.

- From that time until November 14th at 8am., the overhead gantries have registered approximately 22.1 million transactions.
 - 82.6% of the transactions registered were with E-ZPass, which puts MassDOT very close to its goal of 85% E-ZPass market share.

- It's typical to see seasonal variation in market share and variation from weekday to weekends. During the past few weekdays, market share has either approached or exceeded 85%.

The new website www.ezdrivema.com is now activated, so customers can check their accounts, and sign up for transponders. Pay By Plate customers should expect to see invoices beginning to arrive in the mail. MassDOT reminds your constituents of the Pay By Plate "grace period" that is in effect if they do not have an active transponder.

After receiving that Pay By Plate bill, if a customer pays their invoice in full and opens an E-ZPass account, they will receive an automatic credit on their new E-ZPass account equal to the difference between the Pay By Plate rate and E-ZPass MA rate. For the first 6 months, this program will be offered on any Pay By Plate bill a customer receives, and then after 6 months, on the first Pay By Plate bill a new customer receives.

This grace period was instated earlier this month as a result of comments made by the MassDOT Board of Directors at an August board meeting. MassDOT also received a great amount of feedback from several public meetings held throughout the Commonwealth, and chose to implement this incentive discount program for Pay By Plate customers.

Next Steps:

As things continue to progress, MassDOT will provide you briefings on a monthly basis, as opposed to the Monday/Friday schedule that we have been on (last Monday of each month) during this next phase of construction.

We will also provide you with data in an effort to quantify the impact of removing the toll booths on congestion. There will be graphics generated comparing travel time during the second phase of construction to pre-toll demolition. These will be provided in the next legislative briefing.

Stay Informed

Follow @MassDOT on Twitter for updates. MassDOT implemented AETinfo@dot.state.ma.us as a resource for constituents with any questions, comments, or concerns related to construction. For constituents with E-ZPass or Pay By Plate billing questions, please contact the EZDriveMA hotline or EZDriveMA website below. As always, please reach out to your Legislative Liaison or Community Affairs Liaison for immediate assistance. If there is information not contained in this briefing that you would like reported on, please let us know.

Thank you again for your interest in this project.

Respectfully submitted.