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DCR ANNOUNCES INTERIM REPAIRS TO STORROW DRIVE TUNNEL

Order of seven major Charles River Basin reconstruction projects under review

BOSTON – Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. today announced the agency will spend \$6.8 million on interim repairs to the Storrow Drive tunnel while a long-term construction plan is finalized.

“Our first responsibility is to public safety,” said Commissioner Sullivan. “These repairs are necessary to keep the Storrow Drive tunnel operational until we begin the full reconstruction. We will use the additional time those repairs provide to work through the challenge of managing reconstruction of this heavily traveled roadway and place it in the context of all the major projects that have to be done in the area in the years ahead.”

The interim repairs, which will begin early in 2008 and continue for six to nine months, will include replacing deteriorated concrete in the roof and wall sections and installing waterproofing membranes in roof joints to prevent water seepage. Work is expected to be conducted at night, allowing the tunnel to be open for traffic during the day.

DCR has already begun \$430,000 in immediate repairs to the drainage system and structural beams in the tunnel. Those repairs began Sunday, Nov. 4, and are expected to conclude in four to six weeks. Sullivan said DCR is also in the process of finalizing negotiations with a nationally recognized, independent engineering firm to review its pending and future work on the Storrow Drive tunnel.

In addition, DCR will work with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Executive Office of Transportation, and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) to conduct a sequencing study of road and bridge repairs in the Charles River Basin. The study will determine the optimal order and timing of the projects to protect public safety, maintain traffic flow, and manage construction impacts. That study, for which many stakeholders will be consulted, is expected to be completed in six to nine months.

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“This study will enable the state’s transportation and environmental agencies to place the Storrow Drive tunnel rehabilitation in the context of all the major projects that have to be completed in the area in the years ahead,” said Commissioner Sullivan. “The long-term Storrow Drive solution cannot be realized without considering the entire transportation network.”

“Proper planning is critical to any infrastructure investment, and this study will provide a path for us to address the road and bridge needs in the Charles River Basin,” said MassHighway Commissioner Luisa Paiewonsky. “We look forward to working with EOEEA and DCR on this study to lay out a plan that will address these needs in a realistic and safe manner.”

Over the next 10-15 years, six major DCR bridges over the Charles River, as well as the Bowker Overpass, will require approximately \$300 million in repairs or reconstruction. These bridges and roadways carry more than 440,000 vehicles a day into and out of the city of Boston. The sequencing study will help DCR and MassHighway determine the best order to minimize traffic disruption and impacts on surrounding communities. MassHighway will manage the construction on all of these projects.

The major projects being studied are:

- BU Bridge, which carries about 41,000 vehicles a day;
- Craigie Drawbridge and Craigie Dam Bridge, about 116,000 vehicles a day;
- Eliot Bridge, about 70,100 vehicles a day;
- Longfellow Bridge, about 49,500 vehicles a day;
- River Street Bridge, about 32,100 vehicles a day;
- Bowker Overpass, about 27,000 vehicles a day;
- Storrow Drive Tunnel, about 105,000 vehicles a day.

Preliminary reviews of the DCR bridge and tunnel projects indicate that the Craigie Bridge and Craigie Dam Bridge will be the first to reach construction. The drawbridge needs a complete replacement of the draw span, the machinery, and the electrical systems, at an estimated cost of about \$19 million, while the dam bridge needs superstructure and deck repairs and sidewalk replacements, for an estimated cost of about \$5 million.

Work on the Craigie bridges is currently under design by the firm of Hardesty and Hanover, and DCR estimates the design and specifications will be completed by December 2008, with the project ready for bid in January 2009.

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