



SPN H.003915 I-49 ICC EIS
Status Update
December 1, 2020

General Status

The project will be off schedule by approximately four months resulting from FHWA direction provided in November 2020. Please see below for details.

1. Cultural Resources Survey

Required: A revised CRS with an addendum summarizing the new survey data will be submitted to the SHPO for approval.

Currently: All field survey for cultural resources has been completed (BA 1, BA 2, and BA 5). Coastal Environments is preparing the necessary documents (structure forms) and curating artifacts as part of the addendum to be prepared. The addendum to the CRS is anticipated to be submitted in late January 2021.

2. Finalize conceptual interchange layouts with potential impacts

Completed: Providence resubmitted Build Alternative 1 geometry with comments addressed from October 2019.

Currently: DOTD has requested more data that is part of the line and grade task. Providence is working to provide this data and anticipates submitting it in January 2021.

3. Finalize and submit an Alternatives Analysis for FHWA and DOTD review

Completed: A new Alternatives Analysis was submitted to DOTD for review and comment in accordance with the former schedule on September 4, 2020.

Currently: As of November, FHWA indicated that they will not be reviewing this document. They have requested that only draft chapters of the EIS be provided for review and that alternatives analysis be held as incomplete until after the Section 106 process has been completed, or at least comments have been provided by the SHPO. This is not in accord with previous comments from 2019, whereby the interim alternatives analysis was requested to be resubmitted with additional detail on BA 5, including updated and realistic cost data for all the alternatives. FHWA agreed to review a draft table of contents for the draft EIS and is in internal discussion to provide direction to the project team on what is acceptable for us to work on while awaiting the conclusion of the Section 106 process.

4. Acceptance of the Alternative Analysis by FHWA and DOTD (required to complete the draft EIS) and the Preparation of Technical Studies

These require acceptance of #3 above.



Note that the Section 106 process will be followed by a Section 4(f) evaluation. With the SHPO's comments relative to the creation of a new historic district, it is possible that none of the current build alternatives will avoid Section 4(f) resources. DOTD has approved Providence to develop a build alternative that avoids Section 4(f) resources, as is required by the FHWA Section 4(f) policy paper. This requires a previously eliminated alternative that avoided such resources to be further developed. Development of this alternative will not affect the project schedule as revised.

5. Public Outreach in the form of stakeholder briefings, a Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting, and a public hearing will be conducted in conjunction with the release of the draft EIS

Currently: A media release was provided to inform the public that the project continues forward. The CAC members (new and old) met via Zoom on October 29, 2020, where the project team provided an update the project and discussed the roll and responsibilities of the CAC. The next meeting is anticipated to be scheduled in February 2021.