



PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

October 16, 2018

AT

Westfield City Hall, Room 315

WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

6:30 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

Columbia Greenway Trail Project

IN THE CITY OF WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

**JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Project File No.603783

A Public Informational Meeting will be held by MassDOT to discuss the Columbia Greenway Trail project in Westfield, MA.

**WHERE: Westfield City Hall, Room 315
59 Court Street
Westfield, MA 01085**

WHEN: Tuesday, October 16, 2018 @ 6:30PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Columbia Greenway Rail Trail (Center Downtown Section). All views and comments made at the meeting will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of the construction of the final segment of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, including 3,500 feet of multi-use recreational trail and the rehabilitation/replacement of five railroad bridges in Downtown Westfield. The project begins at the end of the existing Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, near Main Street and ends at the recently constructed Columbia Greenway North Segment at the Westfield River Railroad Bridge. The improvements to the five bridges include a new signature bridge over Main Street, rehabilitation of the bridge over Elm Street, and the replacement of the bridges over Thomas, Chapel and Orange Street.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The city is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be discussed at this meeting.

Written views received by MassDOT subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five (5) days prior to the date of the meeting shall be displayed for public inspection and copying at the time and date listed above. Plans will be on display one-half hour before the meeting begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project. A project handout will be made available on the MassDOT website listed below.

Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the Public Informational Meeting regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Roadway Project Management, Project File No. **603783**. Such submissions will also be accepted at the meeting. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public meeting transcript must be postmarked within ten (10) business days of this Public Informational Meeting. Project inquiries may be emailed to dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us

This location is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), fax (857-368-0602), TTD/TTY (857-368-0603) or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten (10) business days before the meeting.

In case of inclement weather, meeting cancellation announcements will be posted on the internet at <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Highway/>

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER



Dear Concerned Citizen:

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is committed to building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure that is both safe and efficient for all who use our roadways, bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, while maintaining the integrity of the environment.

As part of the design process for this project, we are conducting this public hearing to explain the proposed improvements, listen to your comments and answer any questions you may have. At the conclusion of the hearing, MassDOT will review all of your comments and, where feasible, incorporate them into the design of the project.

We recognize that road and bridge construction can create inconveniences for the public. MassDOT places a great deal of emphasis on minimizing the temporary disruptive effects of construction.

MassDOT encourages input from local communities and values your opinions. Please be assured that we will undertake no project without addressing the concerns of the community.

Sincerely,

Patricia A Leavenworth, P. E.
Chief Engineer

WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

WHY A PUBLIC HEARING?

To provide an assured method whereby the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can furnish to the public information concerning the State's highway construction proposals, and to afford every interested resident of the area an opportunity to be heard on any proposed project. At the same time, the hearings afford the Commonwealth an additional opportunity to receive information from local sources which would be of value to the State in making its final decisions to what design should be advanced for development.

WHY NOT A VOTE ON HIGHWAY PLANS?

The hearings are not intended to be a popular referendum for the purpose of determining the nature of a proposed improvement by a majority of those present. They do not relieve the duly constituted officials of a State highway department of the necessity for making decisions in State highway matters for which they are charged with full responsibility.

WHAT DOES A PUBLIC HEARING ACCOMPLISH?

It is designed to ensure the opportunity for, or the availability of, a forum to provide factual information which is pertinent to the determination of the final alternative considered by the state to best serve the public interest, and on which improvement projects are proposed to be undertaken.

It is important that the people of the area express their views in regard to the proposal being presented, so that views can be properly recorded in the minutes of the meeting. These minutes will be carefully studied and taken into consideration in the determination of the final design.

RIGHT OF WAY ISSUES

A secure right of way is necessary for this project. Temporary construction easements may be required. Your municipality is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. If your property is affected, your rights are fully protected under law.

1. REASON FOR PROJECT

The completion of this project will serve local needs. The proposed enhancement will also be in the interest of others in the greater community, and provide for the public good.

2. WHO CONTACTS ME?

Representatives of the municipality have already contacted or will contact you. They will explain the procedures used in acquiring any necessary rights in land.

3. WHAT ABOUT DONATIONS? WHAT IS A RIGHT OF ENTRY?

Town officials will often seek donations, of parcels, where permanent rights are required. This procedure will minimize the acquisition cost for your community.

A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection, etc. The rights granted are temporary in nature.

4. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ACQUIRED PARCELS?

In the event that donations are not considered, or completed, every effort will be made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded. Municipal and/or outside appraisers will complete an appraisal. Consideration is given to the type of rights needed, whether in fee, permanent or temporary easements. The appraisal will be the basis for arriving at a fair price (for damages that result).

5. MUST I ACCEPT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFER?

No, if the owner feels that the offer is not fair the owner may petition the courts. This action does not stop or delay the acquisition. The action must occur within 3 years. The owner(s) may be paid pro tanto (for the time being). The pro tanto payment will not prejudice the court's final decision.



Figure 2 - Aerial Map

Source Info: MassGIS, VHB

Project Description

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Highway Division (MassDOT) is proposing the construction of the final segment of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail from the existing Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, near Main Street, to the recently constructed Columbia Greenway Rail Trail North Segment over the Westfield River Railroad Bridge. The project includes 3,500 feet of multi-use recreational trail and the rehabilitation/replacement of five railroad bridges.

Proposed Improvements

The proposed project includes construction of a full depth pavement rail trail, access paths to Thomas Street and Elm Street, and new and rehabilitated bridges. The improvements to the five bridges include a new signature bridge over Main Street, rehabilitation of the bridge over Elm Street, and replacement of the bridges over Thomas, Chapel and Orange Street. The improvements along the rail trail include decorative pavement, ornamental lighting, benches, landscaping, retaining walls and fencing.

Existing Conditions

The Project is located within the historic railroad right-of-way (ROW). In 2000, the City of Westfield, purchased the ROW from the railroad. This project will complete the approximately 3-mile trail in Westfield from the Southwick town line to just south of the Westfield River and will connect to the recently constructed Westfield River Esplanade. There are four existing bridges within the limit of the Central Segment.

Right of Way Impacts

There are four permanent easements for the construction of access paths, retaining walls, and other related work. Temporary construction easements are also required to accommodate grading for the construction of the rail trail and access paths.

Maintenance of Traffic During Construction

Most of the rail trail construction will be within the railroad right-of-way and will not impact traffic. Lane shifts may be required to connect the access paths to the existing sidewalks. At least one lane of traffic in each direction will be maintained; however, there could be instances where alternating traffic is proposed during off-peak commuter hours. Detours will be required in order to replace the existing bridges. Preliminary detour plans have been created and will be coordinated with the City of Westfield and abutters prior to the detours being implemented. Every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience to the public and maintain access to businesses and residential driveways.

Project Status – Project Schedule

This project has been programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for Federal Fiscal Year 2019. The Plans on display this evening are at the 75% Design Stage. Comments from this evening will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

Project Construction Cost

The project construction cost will be funded with a combination of moneys from the Federal Highway Administration and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is currently estimated at \$6.6 million.

Address: _____

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E.
Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Public Information Meeting
Columbia Greenway Rail Trail
Westfield
Project File No. 603783
Roadway Project Management Section

