



**DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING WEBINAR**

**AUGUST 19, 2020**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**WESTFIELD RIVER LEVEE MULTI-USE PATH**

**Project No. 608073**

**Roadway Project Management**

**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 HEARING**  
**Project File No. 608073**

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be published on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed **Westfield River Levee Multi-Use Path** project in **Westfield, MA**.

**WHEN:** August 19, 2020.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed **Westfield River Levee Multi-Use Path** project. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

**PROPOSAL:** The proposed project consists of constructing a multi-use path for all non-motorized users in the City of Westfield, along the Westfield River levee, beginning at Ellsworth Street and extending to Williams Riding Way near Meadow Street, for a total length of approximately two miles. The project will include the construction and installation of retaining walls, wood fencing, bicycle racks, park benches, trash receptacles, pathway lighting, and select landscaping. The proposed path will intersect with the Columbia Greenway at the Westfield River Esplanade.

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

Written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 608073. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after this hearing is posted to the MassDOT website listed below. Project inquiries may be emailed to [dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us](mailto:dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us)

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g. interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices, and alternate material formats). 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](mailto: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.

This Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at [www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings](http://www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings)

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 WEBINAR?**

### **WHY A PUBLIC HEARING WEBINAR?**

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will utilize technologies as an assured virtual method for furnishing to the public information concerning the State and municipal highways and roadways 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 and local jurisdiction officials 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. The public also encouraged to express views and positions whether for or against any part or the entirety of a proposal. It will be helpful to MassDOT if expressed views are accompanied by brief explanation of such views.

## **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.

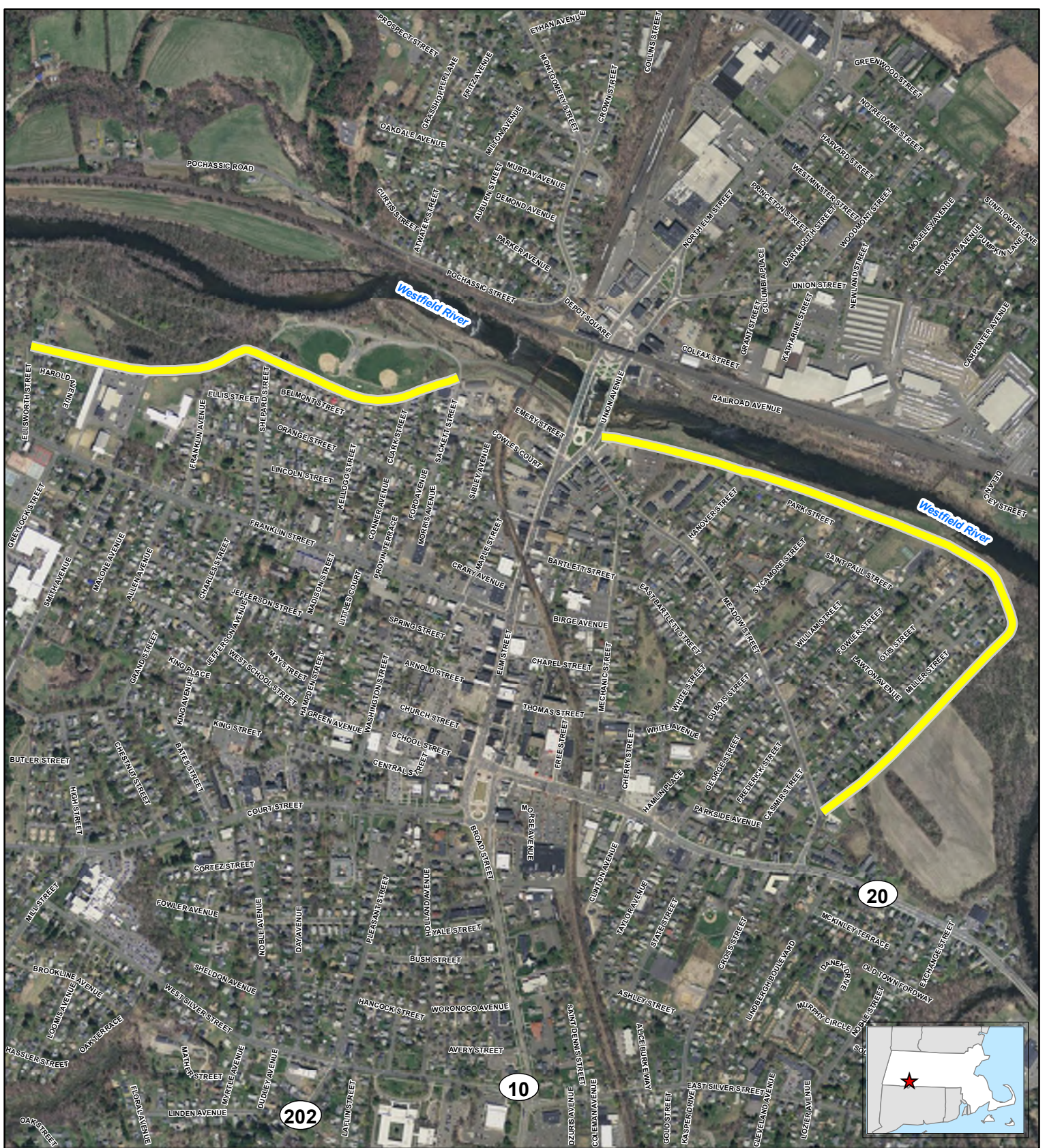
### **4. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ACQUIRED PARCELS?**

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.



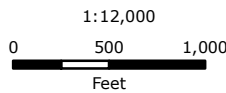


**Legend**

 Westfield River Levee Multi-Use Trail

**Tighe & Bond**  
 Engineers | Environmental Specialists

Based on MassGIS Color Orthophotography (2014)



**LOCUS PLAN  
 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH**

Westfield River Levee  
 Multi-Use Trail  
 Westfield, Massachusetts

November 2018



**WESTFIELD RIVER LEVEE MULTI-USE PATH**  
**Project No. 608073**  
**IN THE CITY OF WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Summary**

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division (MassDOT) and City of Westfield (City) propose the construction of a multi-use path on the existing Westfield River Levee from Ellsworth Street to Williams Riding Way, excluding the previously developed Westfield River Esplanade from Sackett Street to Union Avenue. The project will improve an existing path used by pedestrians and bicyclists for recreational purposes. The path will be widened and paved with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible ramps added to improve access to the path. Protecting the integrity of the existing levee is paramount and has been considered in all aspects of the design. The proposed construction will protect and enhance the flood control structure. All grading and earthwork will be performed on the landward side of the levee resulting in minor impacts to abutting properties.

**Objective**

The goal of the project is to construct a paved multi-use path along the Westfield River Levee, connecting several low-income neighborhoods to downtown Westfield and the north-south Columbia Greenway while protecting and preserving the Westfield River Levee flood control structure. Key components include:

- Widening and paving the crest of the levee to accommodate a 10' pathway meeting current MassDOT and American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO) design standards
- Providing access ramps that comply with ADA and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations
- Installing a wood rail fence along the path to protect users in areas with non-recoverable side slopes and provide separation between the abutters and the path
- Installing retaining walls on the landward side of the levee to limit impacts to adjacent private properties and provide a separation between the abutters and the path
- Providing amenities such as kiosks, benches, bike racks, parking access, lighting, etc., at key locations along the length of the path

**Proposed Activity**

The proposed work will install a 10-foot-wide multi-use accessible path from Ellsworth Street to Sackett Street and from Union Avenue to Williams Riding Way. The path will be constructed on top of the existing levee and no cuts below the 100-year flood freeboard elevation or into the impervious borrow core of the levee will be made. The path will include connection to two existing parking areas and development of a new parking lot at the Williams Riding Way trailhead. Access to the path will be provided at strategic locations and will comply with current ADA and MAAB regulations. The one proposed location where current conditions will not allow for the provision of a compliant ramp (Kellogg Street) will be subject to an ADA Variance request. Retaining walls will be installed to minimize slope impacts to adjacent properties. A wood rail fence will also be installed in areas where there are non-recoverable side slopes or concerns with proximity to abutting properties.

**Pathway**

A 10-foot wide pave HMA path is proposed with stabilized shoulders on either side of the pavement to meet MassDOT and AASHTO standards. Railings will be installed a minimum of 1-foot off the edge Of pavement.

Retaining walls will be constructed on the landward side of the levee in areas where grading would impact abutters. The walls will limit property impacts and create separation between the path and the abutters. No grading will occur on the riverward side of the crest to avoid impacts to Bordering Land Subject to Flooding, the undeveloped portions of the Riparian Zone, and other environmentally sensitive areas. The path will include pavement markings and signage that meet current state and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards. Minor modifications and treatments to Ellsworth Street, Shepard Street, and Sackett Street will be made to provide a safe intersection with the path. Lighting is also proposed on a section of the path beginning at Shepard Street and extending to Chapman Playground.

### **Access & Parking**

Access to the path will be provided at several locations including Ellsworth Street, Kellogg Street, Clark Street, the Westfield River Esplanade, Union Avenue, Meadow Street “River Walk” municipal parking, Fowler Street, and Williams Riding Way. ADA compliant ramps will be built at Clark Street, Meadow Street municipal parking, Fowler Street, and Williams Riding Way. Ellsworth Street, the Esplanade, and Union Avenue will have “at-grade” connections. Kellogg Street is an existing neighborhood stairway access, which will be rebuilt if an ADA variance can be secured.

No parking is proposed on the western portion of the levee (Ellsworth to Sackett), as there is ample on street parking available near the access points. The Westfield River Esplanade also features a parking area with ADA compliant access just east of Sackett Street. The eastern part of the trail will have parking facilities at both ends. The eastern part will start at Union Avenue and Meadow Street at an existing municipal lot. The eastern part will end at Williams Riding way, where an existing gravel lot will be expanded and paved.

### **Utilities**

Lighting will be installed from Shepard Street to Sackett Street and the Meadow Street parking lot to Fowler Street. This stretch constitutes the “urban core” of the pathway and also spans between two existing public park areas – Whitney Field and Chapman Playground. Minor storm drain modifications will be proposed at the Williams Riding Way parking area and near the end of St. Paul Street.

### **Right of Way Impacts:**

A secure right-of-way is necessary for the proposed project. Temporary easements will be required for the construction of this project.

### **Maintenance of Traffic during Construction:**

A detour plan with proper signage will be provided as part of the Traffic Management Plan to guide traffic throughout the construction phase.

### **Project Schedule:**

The design plans displayed at this meeting are at the 25% design stage. Comments made at this hearing will be incorporated to the maximum extent feasible. The 75% design will commence following the hearing. The project is not programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program in any appropriate Federal Fiscal Year at this time.

### **Project Construction Cost:**

The estimated cost of the project is \$5.3 million. This project is funded under the Federal Aid Program whereby 80% of the construction cost will be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and 20% of the construction cost will be funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.







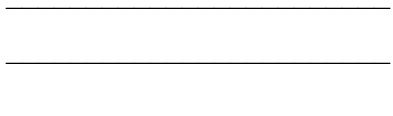
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Please Place  
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MassDOT – Highway Division  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Public Hearing Webinar  
WESTFIELD RIVER LEVEE MULTI-USE PATH  
**WESTFIELD, MA**  
Project File No. 608073  
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