VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

JULY 24th, 2025

FOR THE PROPOSED

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT ROUTE 1 & MERRIMAC STREET
Project No. 608029
Project Management

IN THE CITY OF NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

Project Description: Newburyport – Intersection Improvements at the Intersection of Route 1 and Merrimac Street
Project File No. 608029

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed project in Newburyport, MA.

WHEN: 6:30PM, Thursday, July 24th, 2025

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The purpose of this project is for the installation of two traffic signal systems on Merrimac Street at the Route 1 on and off-ramps in Newburyport, MA. The project limits extend along Merrimac Street from Strong Street to Market Street and to Pleasant Street to the south. The Project shall improve the functionality of the Route 1 ramps at Merrimac Street by incorporating adequate sight distance, roadway micro resurfacing and restriping, inclusion of complete street elements including ADA accessibility, pedestrian curb ramps and bicycle accommodations, pavement markings and signage, and associated utility adjustments. Work on the minor streets will be limited to approach work unless drainage or utility elements require further improvements or adjustments.

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

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 608029. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted.

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, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, 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,

Carrie E. Lavallee, 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 CONCERNS

The State is responsible for securing the Right of Way for this project. If your property, or a portion of it, must be acquired by the State for highway purposes in the interest of all people of the Commonwealth, your rights are fully protected under the law. Briefly, here are some of the answers to questions you might ask.

1. WHO CONTACTS ME?

   Representatives of the Right of Way Bureau of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Highway Division. They will explain the impacts and your rights as protected under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 79.

2. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR MY PROPERTY?

   Every offer is made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded to you for the property, or to appraise the "damage" to the property as a result of the acquisition. MassDOT appraisers, independent appraisers, MassDOT "Review Appraisers" and a Real Estate Appraisal Review Board may all contribute in arriving at an award of damages. The State also pays a proportionate part of the real estate tax for the current year for fee takings, and interest from the date the property is acquired to the payment date, on all impacts.

3. MUST I ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFER?

   No. If, after the figure established as market value has been offered to the owner, the owner feels he or she is not being offered a fair price, he or she has the right, within three years, to appeal to the courts. Pending a court decision, he or she can be paid on a "pro-tanto" basis (or "for the time being") that in no way prejudices the court appeal.

4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY HOUSE?

   The owner will have the opportunity to buy back his or her house, provided he or she has a location to which it can be moved, and the proper permits for its removal. If the owner does not wish to repurchase, the house will be advertised for bids. The highest bidder, who must also have a location and permits for removal, will be awarded the house. Otherwise, the structure will be slated for demolition.

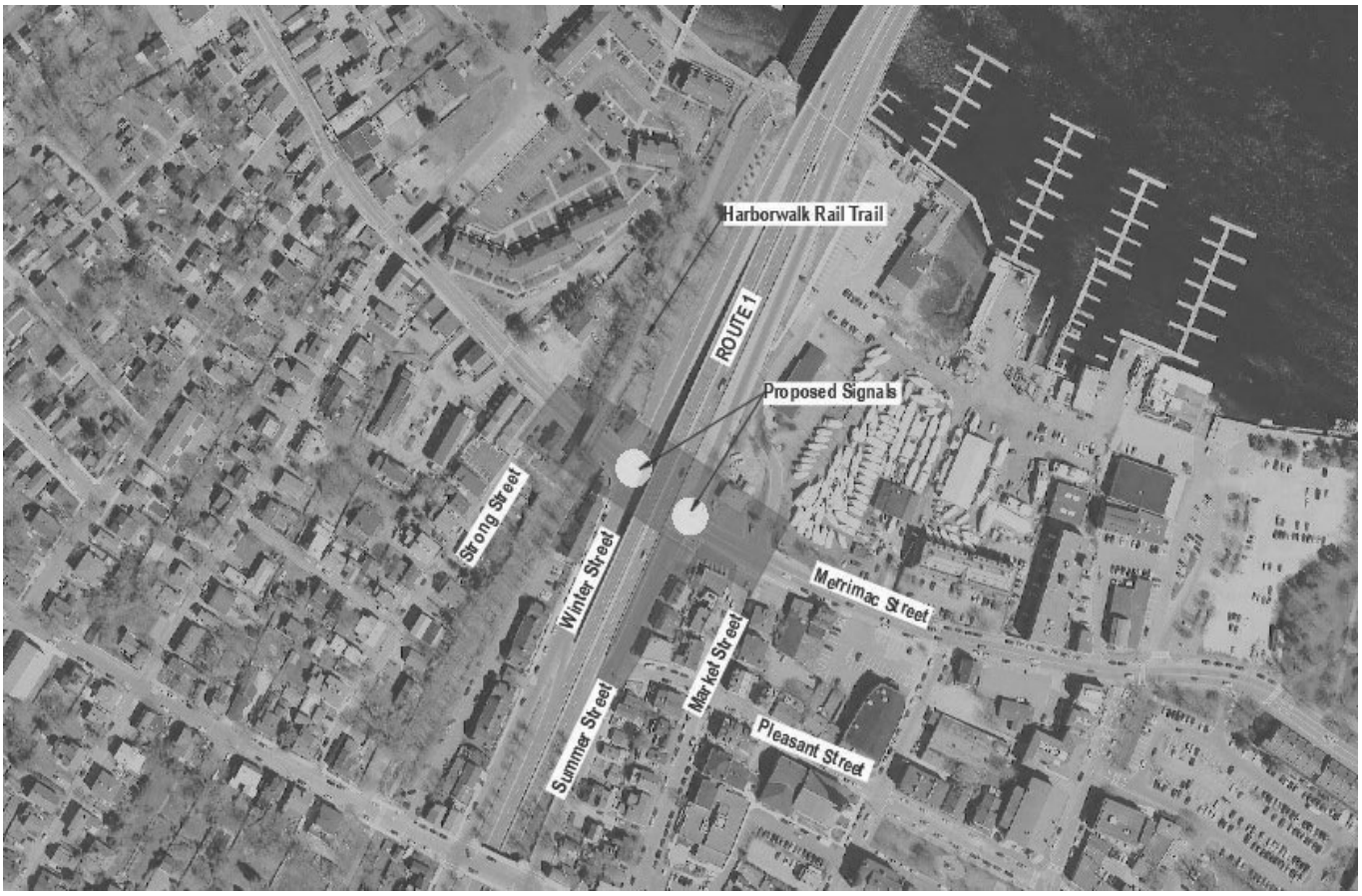
5. WHAT HAPPENS IF I MUST RELOCATE?

   In addition to the market value of the property, the Department pays certain relocation benefits for both owners and tenants of acquired residences and businesses who meet eligibility requirements. Assistance in relocation is also provided. Department brochures are available for details on these benefits.

MassDOT Design Justification Workbook

Project: 608029 Description: NEWBURYPORT - SIGNAL INSTALLATION AT MERRIMAC STREET AND ROUTE 1

LOCUS MAP



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Route 1 intersects with Merrimac Street in Newburyport, MA to form an unsignalized, slip-style ramp system. The Route 1 southbound off-ramp intersects Merrimac Street opposite of Winter Street, near the southern abutment of the Merrimac River bridge crossing. The northbound on-ramp intersects Merrimac Street opposite of Summer Street. The southbound off-ramp and Summer Street operate under stop-control, while the Merrimac Street approaches are free-flowing. Merrimac Street, within the limits of this project, is approximately 40 feet wide with one travel lane in each direction and widens to approximately 52 feet under the Route 1 bridge. The Route 1 southbound off-ramp is approximately 22-feet wide and striped as one lane, however, is typically used by vehicles as two lanes: an exclusive left turn lane and a shared right/through lane. Sidewalks are present along both sides of Merrimac Street, the west side of Winter Street, and the east side of Summer Street. The intersections lack ADA-compliant pedestrian curb ramps, countdown pedestrian signals and accessible pedestrian push bottoms. Merrimac Street does not have bike facilities. The Clipper City Rail Trail, a separated shared-use path facility for bicyclists and pedestrians, runs parallel to the project and starts underneath the bridge adjacent to the waterfront approximately 700-feet north of the project limits.

The project was initiated by MassDOT to address roadway safety and intersection queueing issues. Project elements to address these issues include the incorporation of adequate sight distances, new roadway striping and signage, ADA accessibility improvements, complete streets elements, and two new traffic signal systems.

The project proposes 11-foot travel lanes along Merrimac Street with new striping for 3-foot buffers and 5-foot bicycle lanes in both directions, west of Winter Street and East of Summer Street. Grade separated bike lanes are proposed for Merrimac Street between Winter Street and Summer Street. ADA compliant sidewalks are provided on both sides of Merrimac Street, with ADA compliant crossings at the intersection legs.

Summer Street modifications propose reconfiguring to provide a 2-foot inside shoulder, 11-foot through/left turn lane, 11-foot right turn lane, an 8-foot parking lane, and a 5-foot bicycle lane. The parking lane and bicycle lane will be separated by a 2-foot buffer to reduce conflicts between bicyclists and vehicular doors.

The Route 1 Northbound on ramp was recently restriped to provide a buffered bicycle lane that ultimately provides access to the Clipper City Rail Trail. This configuration of the ramp is to be maintained.

The Route 1 Southbound off ramp will be widened to 32-feet to allow for a 5-foot bike lane, a 2-foot buffer, an 11.5-foot through/right turn lane, an 11.5-foot dedicated left turn lane, and 2-foot shoulder.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Newburyport, MA
Intersection Improvements at Route 1 & Merrimac Street
Project File No. 608029

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. You may e-mail comments directly to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or you may mail this sheet with any additional comments to:

Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management

Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

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Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

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Please Fold and Tape

Please Place Appropriate Postage Here

Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E.
Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Virtual Public Hearing
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT ROUTE 1 & MERRIMAC STREET
NEWBURYPORT
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