



**VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**January 12, 2023**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**Stratton School Improvements (SRTS)  
Project No. 609531  
Project Management**

**IN THE TOWN OF ARLINGTON, 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 PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Project File No. 609531**

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Stratton School Improvements (Safe Routes To School) project in **Arlington, MA**.

**WHEN: 7:00-8:00pm, Thursday, January 12, 2023**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Stratton School Improvements (Safe Routes To School) project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

**PROPOSAL:** The proposed project consists of constructing sidewalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps along Hemlock Street, Dickson Avenue, and Mountain Avenue to facilitate safe pedestrian travel to and from the Stratton Elementary School. Crosswalks will be striped as needed. A bicycle lane will be provided along a segment of the up-hill (northbound) direction of Hemlock Street to facilitate safe bicycling to and from school.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The **Town of Arlington is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands**. The Town'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](mailto:MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us) or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: **Project Management, Project File No. 609531**. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted on the MassDOT website listed below.

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](mailto: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 Live Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be hosted 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

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 Lavalley, 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**

Your Municipality is responsible for securing the right of way for this project. If your property, or a portion of it, must be acquired by the Municipality 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. 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.

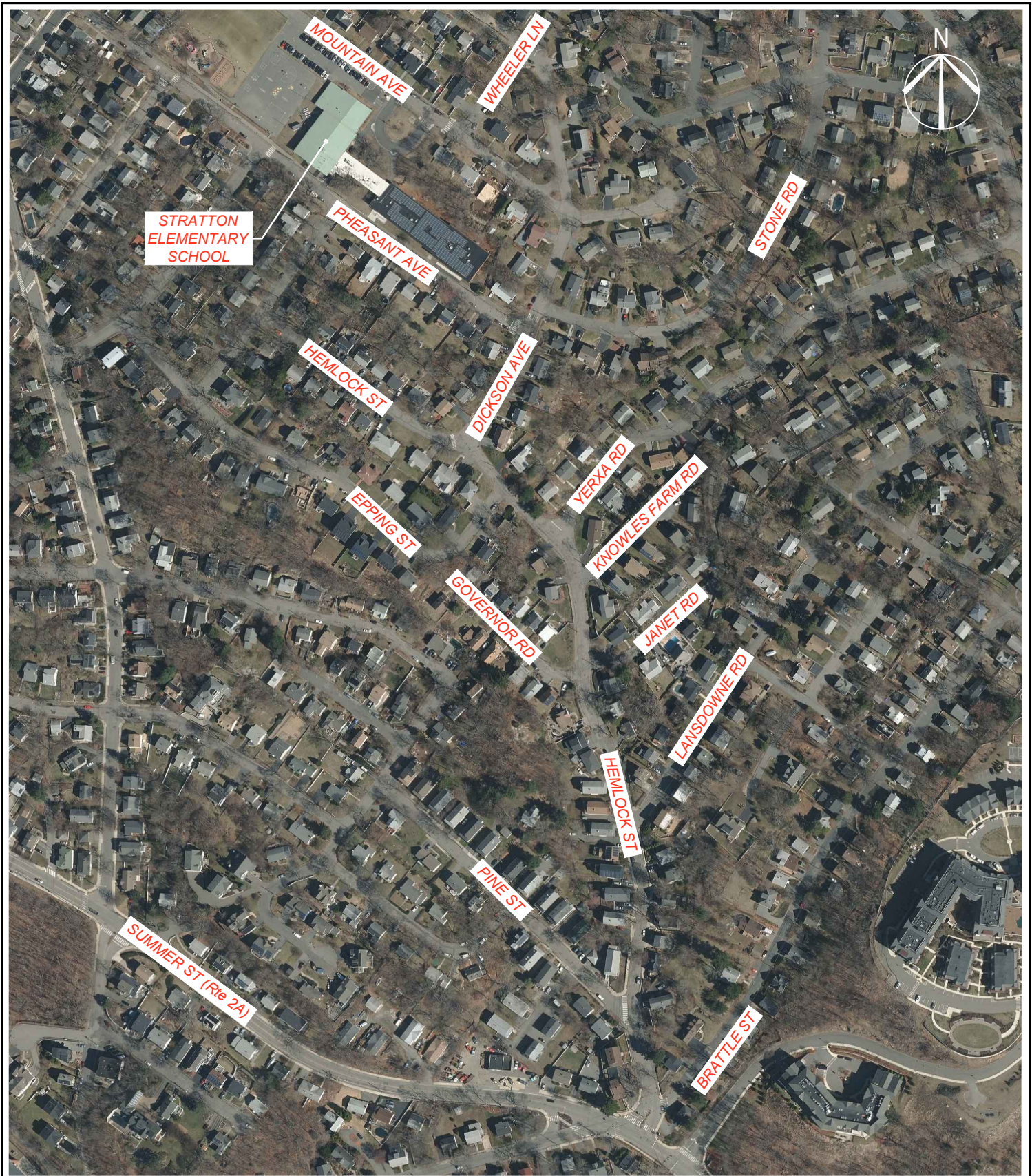
### **4. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ACQUIRED PARCELS?**

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.





Project No. 20154.00

Date: June 2021



PARE CORPORATION  
ENGINEERS - SCIENTISTS - PLANNERS  
8 BLACKSTONE VALLEY PLACE  
LINCOLN, RI 02865  
401-334-4100

## Figure 1 Locus Map

Stratton Elementary School SRTS  
Arlington, Massachusetts



# **Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program**

## **Stratton Elementary School Infrastructure Improvements**

### **(Wheeler Lane, Mountain Avenue, Dickson Avenue, Hemlock Street)**

#### **Arlington, MA**

#### **PROJECT LOCATION**

The project limits generally include approximately 0.05 miles of Wheeler Lane from Dickson Avenue to Mountain Avenue, approximately 0.05 miles of Mountain Avenue from Wheeler Lane to Dickson Avenue, approximately 0.1 miles of Dickson Avenue from Mountain Avenue to Hemlock Street and approximately 0.3 miles of Hemlock Street from Dickson Avenue to Brattle Street. Additionally, minor intersection geometry modifications are proposed within the project limits to reduce pavement width and improve safety.

#### **PROJECT PURPOSE**

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has identified Stratton Elementary School in Arlington, Massachusetts for inclusion in their Safe Routes to School Program. Stratton Elementary School is located at 180 Mountain Avenue. The scope of work under the Safe Routes to School Program generally includes improving and expanding the existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities to ensure safe access to the school. The project team will consider reallocation of the roadway right-of-way (ROW) to accommodate all users specified in the Engineering Directive, E-20-001, issued by MassDOT.

#### **PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

The project includes pedestrian and bicycle accommodation/safety improvements along segments of the four identified roadways. The proposed improvements are as follows:

**Wheeler Lane** includes conversion of the direction of travel such that the roadway will serve one-way vehicular traffic heading away from Dickson Avenue and towards the Stratton Elementary School. Additionally, the existing sidewalk along the west side of the roadway will be widened to meet ADA widths and clearances. To complete the sidewalk network to the school, the sidewalk will be extended via a bump out to continue past the mature tree where it currently terminates to make a proper connection to the intersection with Dickson Avenue.

**Mountain Avenue** includes construction of a sidewalk on the south side of the road, improving curb ramps to be ADA compliant, and improvements to signage and striping. Under existing conditions, the road serves one-way traffic during the morning peak period, and two-way traffic the rest of the day. The roadway will be converted to one-way during all times of the day, reallocating existing pavement space to accommodate the sidewalk construction on the school side of the road. A 5-foot concrete sidewalk (not inclusive of curb) is proposed in this area. Additional width would require more extensive retaining walls.

**Dickson Avenue** includes the construction of a 5-foot concrete sidewalk along the west side of the road, connecting directly to the segment along Mountain Avenue that leads to the school's main entrance. Additional improvements will be made to signing and striping at Stone Road and

Pheasant Avenue. Existing crosswalks at these locations lack curb ramps. These conditions will be improved to ADA compliance.

**Hemlock Street** includes the construction of a 5-foot concrete sidewalk along the west side of the road. South of Yerxa Road, the reconstructed sidewalk will be separated by a 2-foot grass buffer until Pine Street. Between Pine Street and Brattle Street the sidewalk will be typically 7 feet wide with no grass buffer. This design along the west side of the road between Yerxa Road and Brattle Street mimics existing conditions. On the east side of Hemlock Street, sidewalk will be added between Yerxa Road and Knowles Farm Road to accommodate pedestrians walking from adjoining neighborhoods. A rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) is being considered for installation between the two roads to facilitate people crossing. Sidewalk will also be added from the terminus section to the north of Lansdowne Street to Janet Road creating a safe pedestrian network along the east side of the road for residents between the roadways and the Janet Road neighborhood. Additional crosswalks, with appropriate curb ramps, will be added at Janet Road and Lansdowne Road to connect residents living on the east side of the road to the sidewalk network along the west side, leading to the school's entrance.

**Project Wide** a 5-foot-wide striped roadway grade bike lane is proposed to be installed within the project limits; along the east side of Hemlock Street, the east side of Dickson Avenue and along the north side of Mountain Avenue. Bike lane signage is proposed, as needed, within the project limits and bike lane crossings have been added to all side street intersections in which the bike lane crosses as well as an additional crossing on Dickson Avenue, connecting the bike lane on Dickson Avenue to the bike lane on Mountain Avenue. The addition of the bike lane will eliminate parking on the east side of the roadway on Hemlock Street and Dickson Avenue and along both sides of Mountain Avenue. No parking signage is proposed throughout the project limits to indicate these restrictions.

Further, small areas of mill and overlay are required on all project roadways to remove existing crosswalk markings that are being relocated or are not compliant with MassDOT and MUTCD standards. Mill and overlay will also be performed at locations of proposed crosswalks that currently have poor condition, extensive cracking and an uneven surface. Full resurfacing or roadway reconstruction is not included in the project scope, and will be performed by the Town following the SRTS improvements

Finally, curb radii at intersections within the project limits have been reviewed and are being modified to reduce the extent to excessive pavement that leads to higher motorist speeds and ambiguity in right-of way. Three particular locations for these improvements include the intersections of Hemlock Street at Dickson Avenue, at Yerxa Road and at Pine Street.

## **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

The proposed improvements do not include roadway modifications. Curblane changes will be limited to upgrading wheelchair ramps as necessary to ADAAG compliance and reducing excessive pavement width at intersections. The primary improvements, including the sidewalk construction and bike lane development, do not require changes in the roadways' horizontal and vertical geometry, but to directly abut or encroach within the existing travelway. Given these construction conditions, traffic management is expected to include alternating one-way setups and lane shifts.



## **RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS**

Based on the proposed design, there are several temporary easements, one permanent (utility) easement and one fee taking (for sidewalk reconstruction) anticipated for the project. The terrain within the limits of work is rolling, and the extent of regrading adjacent to the proposed sidewalks are minimized by reducing existing roadway width as necessary. The proposed improvements will require temporary construction easements along several parcels (35 total easements identified in 25% design). These temporary and permanent ROW impacts will be secured by the Town of Arlington. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisition will be discussed further at this hearing.

## **PROJECT COST**

The current estimate of the total construction cost of this project is approximately \$1,252,124.43 using a combination of Federal and State funding sources. The Town of Arlington is responsible for all costs associated with the acquisition of temporary and permanent easements and takings, which are primarily temporary easements to accommodate regrading adjacent to the reconstruction.

## **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

The design plans presented this evening are at the 25% design stage. Design, permitting and right-of-way acquisition must be completed by the end of 2023 with a project advertisement in the Spring of 2024. Construction is anticipated to begin in Summer 2024.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Arlington, MA  
Stratton School Improvements (SRTS)  
Project File No. 609531

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](mailto: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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Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appropriate  
Postage Here

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

RE: Virtual Public Hearing  
Stratton School Improvements (SRTS)  
**TOWN OF ARLINGTON**  
Project File No. 609531  
Attn: Project Management

