



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

October 27th, 2020

FOR THE PROPOSED

**Intersection Improvements at Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue
Project No. 608723
Project Management**

IN THE TOWN OF ATHOL, 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. 608723

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be published on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Intersection Improvements at Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue project in **Athol, MA**.

WHEN: Tuesday, October 27, 2020

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Intersection Improvements at Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue 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 roadway and intersection improvements at the intersection of Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue in Athol. Other improvements will include reconstruction of a retaining wall, increased sight distance, improved bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, a flashing warning beacon, pavement markings, and signage. To accommodate pedestrians, the project will include a sidewalk or a shared-use path (with bicyclists) along the north side of Crescent Street within the project limits. Crescent Street will be reconstructed as a dead-end roadway, terminating approximately 200 feet east of Brattle Street. In accordance with applicable design guides, the shared-use path will accommodate bicyclists east of the proposed termination of Crescent Street. Bicyclists will share the dead-end portion of Crescent Street with low-speed vehicular traffic, as steep terrain precludes widening.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Town is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the 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. 608723**. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing is posted to the MassDOT website listed below. Project inquiries may be emailed to 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, 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 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 business days before the hearing.

This Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at 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?

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.

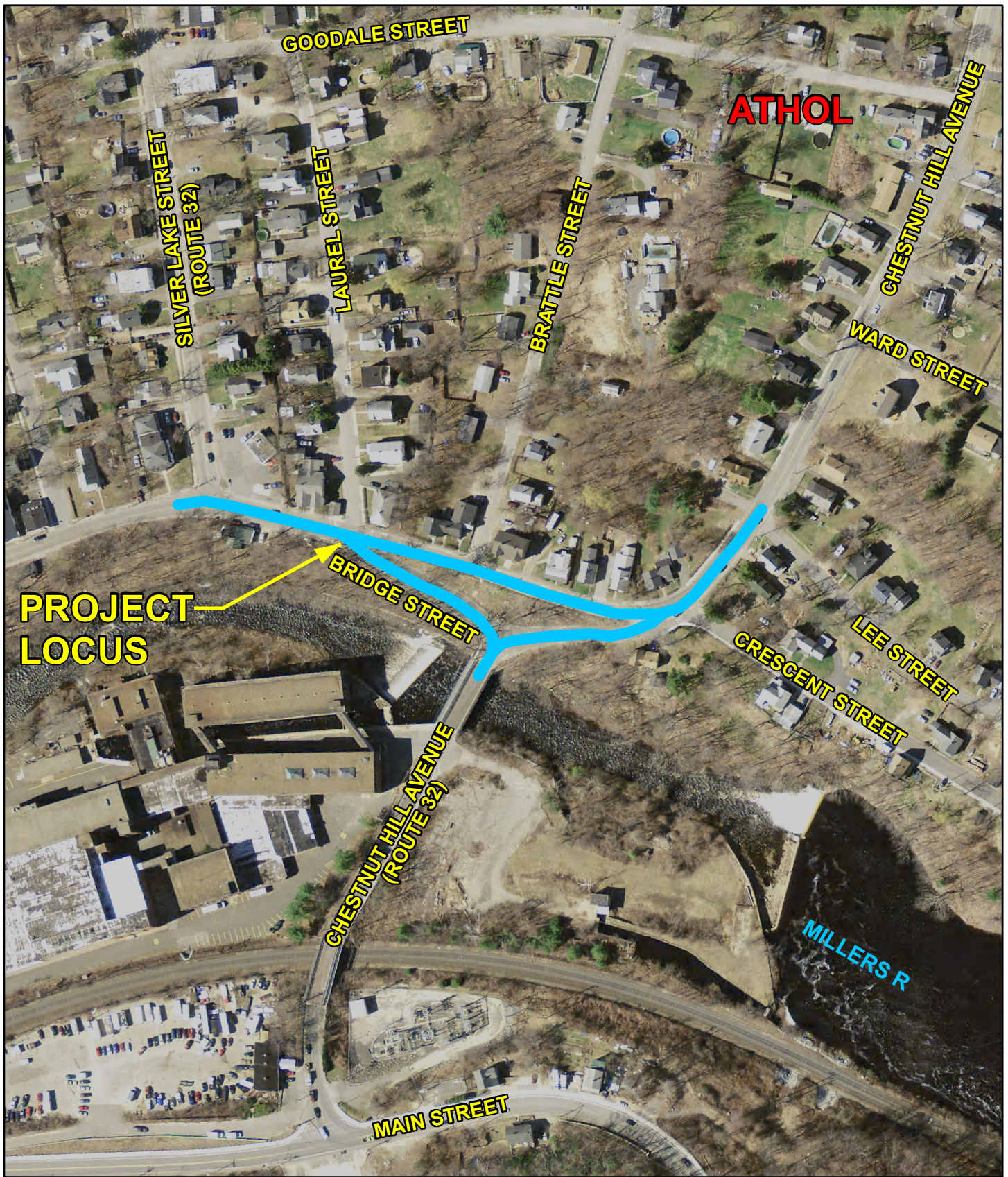
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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

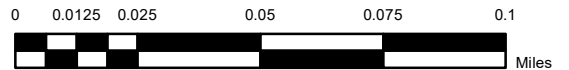
5. MUST I ACCEPT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFER?

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.



Athol, MA
BRIDGE STREET (ROUTE 32)
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

FIGURE 1. PROJECT LOCUS



Reconstruction and Related Work at Crescent Street (Route 32) & Chestnut Hill Avenue

Project Location

The proposed improvements extend approximately 0.25 miles along Crescent Street from the intersection with Silver Lake Road to the intersection with Chestnut Hill Avenue. The proposed project will also extend down Bridge Street (Route 32) approximately 300 feet and up Chestnut Hill Avenue approximately 500 feet to the intersection with Lee Street.

Project Purpose

The purpose of the project is to address existing safety concerns and improve safety for all roadway users at the intersection of Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue in Athol. The project will also address the deteriorating infrastructure including the existing retaining walls.

Proposed Improvements

The following improvements are proposed:

- Modify configuration of intersections to improve traffic control and safety
- Reduce the steep grades
- Install a flashing warning beacon
- Dead end Crescent St at Chestnut Hill Ave to address poor sight distance
- Shared use path through the dead end for bicyclists and pedestrians to avoid the steep portion of road
- Widen sidewalks and shoulders for improved pedestrian and bicycle accommodation
- Install ADA compliant sidewalks and crosswalks
- Install a rectangular rapid flashing beacon at proposed crosswalk
- Increase pavement depth and install new subgrade
- Install New drainage for stormwater
- Reconstruct both deteriorating retaining walls in the project area

Traffic Management

During construction operations, roadways within the project area will remain open to vehicular traffic to the extent practical. Detours are anticipated during full depth roadway and retaining wall construction. Occasional short traffic disruptions and travel lane/shoulder closures may occur, but every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience to the travelling public and abutting residents and businesses during construction. Pedestrian and vehicular access to abutting properties will be maintained throughout construction.

Right of Way Impacts

Temporary construction easements will be required for grading impacts to lawns, driveways, and walkways and to restore impacts to adjacent properties. Permanent easements will be required for utility pole relocations and overhead utility wires. The permanent easements will also be required for construction of sidewalks. Fee takings will also be required for retaining wall construction. The Right of Way Bureau is responsible for acquiring all of the necessary rights in private and public lands for the design, construction, and implementation of this project. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisition will be discussed at this hearing.

Project Cost

The current estimate of the total construction cost of this project is approximately \$4.8 Million

Project Schedule

The project being presented is at the 25% design stage. Design, permitting and right of way acquisition is anticipated to complete by the Spring of 2023. The earliest that Construction is anticipated to begin is in the Spring of 2023, but the start date is dependent on availability of funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) programmed by the Montachusett Region MPO.

Please Fold and Tape



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

RE: Virtual Public Hearing
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