



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

JUNE 18, 2025

FOR THE PROPOSED

**LEDGE REMOVAL ALONG ROUTE 8
Project Management**

IN THE TOWN OF BECKET, 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 DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**Project Description: Becket – Ledge Removal along Route 8, between Milemarkers 28.002 and 27.998
Project File No. 609506**

A Design Public Hearing will be held to present the design for the proposed project in Becket, MA.

**WHERE: Becket Town Hall, Lower Level
557 Main Street
Becket, MA 01223**

WHEN: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 @ 6:00pm-7:00pm

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: Throughout Berkshire County (including on Route 8 in Becket), ledge outcroppings and exposed rock faces are adjacent to State Highway. Some of these areas were created when the highways were originally built, reconstructed or widened; or when natural events, such as Tropical Storm Irene, exposed natural rock slopes to additional weathering and erosion. Many of these locations pose a potential safety hazard from falling rock or slope failure, which could injure highway users or shut down some sections of State Highway for an extended time. Highway closures at many of these locations would result in lengthy detours, affecting regional commuting and commerce. This Project will design site-specific improvements to address safety issues related to exposed or falling rock at this location. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations cannot be provided within the roadway layout, consistent with existing conditions.

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. 609506. 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). 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.

In case of inclement weather, a cancellation announcement will be 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.
Acting 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?

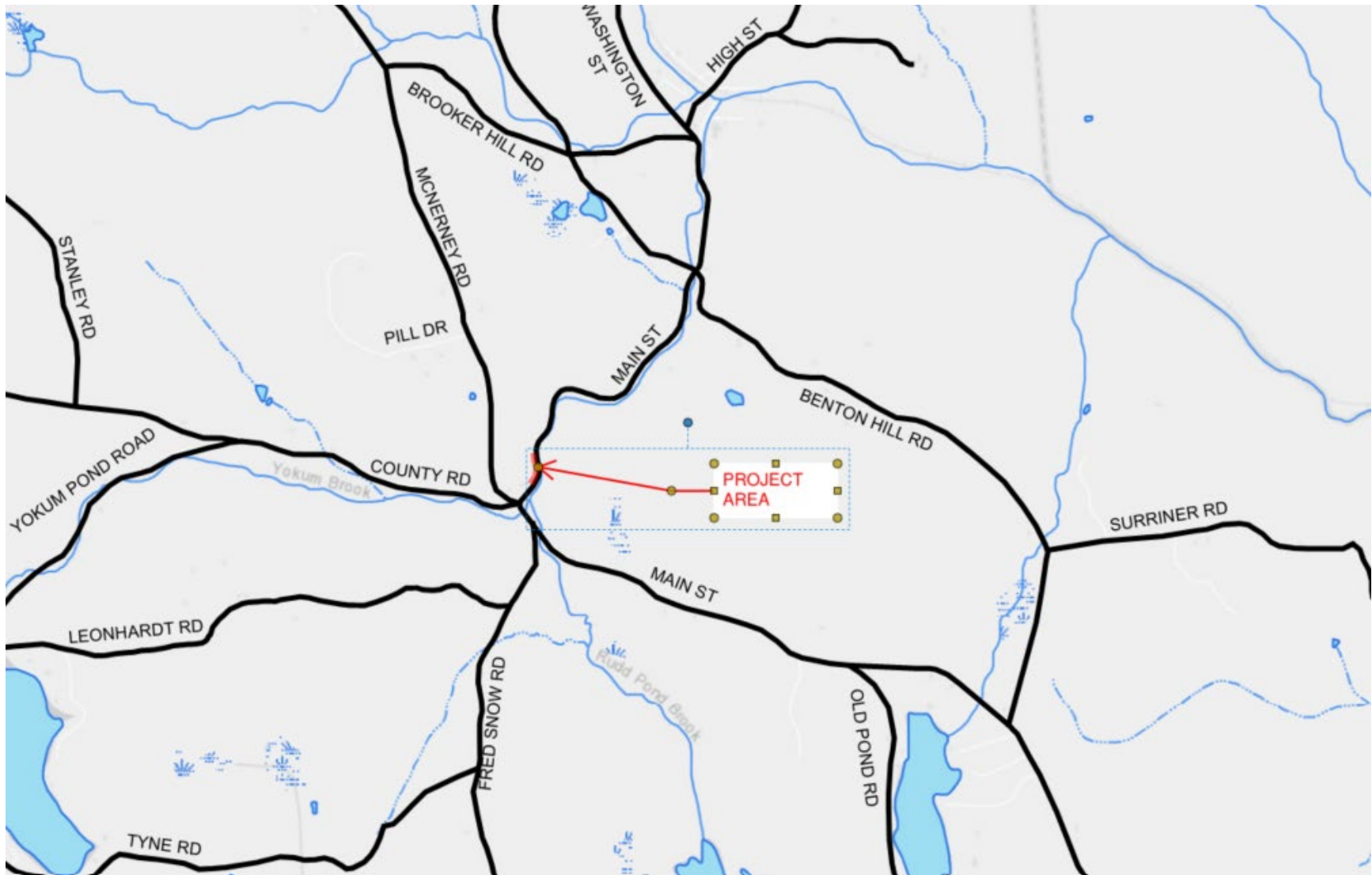
No. If, after the figure established as market value has been offered to the owner, the owner feels he or she is not being offered a fair price, he or she has the right, within three years, to appeal to the courts. Pending a court decision, he or she can be paid on a "pro-tanto" basis (or "for the time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



LOCUS MAP
BECKET LEDGE REMOVAL, ROUTE 8 (MAIN STREET)

Project Location and Existing Conditions

The Project is located in Becket along Main Street (Route 8) north of McNerney Road, approximately from Mile Marker 27.998 to Mile Marker 28.002. The rock slope to be evaluated and removed/set back from the roadway edge is approximately 250-foot-long, along the west side of a curved section of Main Street. The current rock slope is approximately 30-35 feet high at a 1:1 slope, with unfavorable joint orientations and very irregular weathering. The current slope has a history of rocks falling and reaching the roadway surface. The existing ditch at the toe of the rock slope and edge of roadway is ineffective as a catchment area.

The roadway cross section consists of two 11-foot travel lanes, 1-foot shoulder on the east side and 5-foot shoulder on the west side of Main Street. The existing cross section does not include sidewalks or bicycle facilities.

The Yokum Brook is located east of Main Street and within 100-feet of the rock slope and proposed work zone.

There are overhead power and communication lines located along the east side of Main Street. Underground utilities consist of catch basins, located along the west side of Main Street with cross culvert pipes crossing under Main Street and discharge along the embankment along the east side, adjacent to Yokum Brook. It does not appear any other utilities are present within the rock slope area.

Project Scope of Work

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is proposing to remove portions of the existing rock slope along Main Street (Route 8) North of McNerney Road, approximately from Mile Marker 27.998 to Mile Marker 28.002. The scope of the project is to move the face of rock away from the western travel edge, prevent rocks from falling on the roadway, improve sight distance and minimize hazards for motorists.

The cross-section width of the road will be maintained in the proposed conditions. The proposed cross-section will match existing conditions and include two 11-foot travel lanes, 1-foot shoulder on the east side and a 5-foot shoulder on the west side of the roadway. It is anticipated that the rock slope will be cut back from the edge of roadway approximately 14 feet. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes are not proposed for this project. The project is for rock removal to reduce the risk of rocks from falling on the roadway surface and improve safety for motorists. The proposed roadway surface within the limits of work will be milled & overlaid with Hot Mix Asphalt, SUPERPAVE Surface Course.

Existing drainage patterns and infrastructure will remain unchanged in the proposed condition. The existing catch basins along the west side on Main Street will be inspected to determine if replacement is needed. The existing outfalls on the east side of Main Street will be maintained and no new outfalls are planned for this project.

Environmental permitting and coordination include the preparation of an Environmental Checklist and a Notice of Intent (NOI), that will be submitted to the Becket Conservation Commission for work being conducted adjacent to Yokum Brook. Jurisdictional resource areas have been flagged in accordance with the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act Regulations (WPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flagging procedures.

Maintenance of Traffic During Construction:

The Contractor will be required to coordinate with MassDOT and Town Officials regarding work hours and changes to traffic patterns. Detour routes are not anticipated for this project.

It is anticipated that the proposed rock and ledge removal can be accomplished with little disturbance to traffic on Route 8. The potential for a lane closure may be required during certain construction activities which will result in alternating traffic on the northbound lane, during construction hours.

Project Schedule:

The design reviewed at this meeting is at the 25% stage of completion. Comments made at this design hearing will be incorporated to the maximum extent feasible in the 75% design currently scheduled for August 2025. Final design is scheduled to be completed in early 2026. The date for public bidding advertisement is scheduled for Fall 2026.

Project Cost:

The estimated construction cost for this project is approximately \$3.0 million. Funding for the construction will be Federal Highway Administration (80%) (FHWA) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (20%).

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Becket, MA
Ledge Removal Along Route 8
Project File No. 609506

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.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

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: Public Hearing
LEDGE REMOVAL ALONG ROUTE 8
BECKET
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