



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 26, 2023

FOR THE PROPOSED

**BRIDGE SUPERSTRUCTURE REPLACEMENT AND WIDENING PROJECT, B-16-052, BOWKER
OVERPASS OVER MASS PIKE, MBTA/CSX, AND IPSWICH STREET
PROJECT NO. 606496
BRIDGE NO. B-16-052
MAJOR PROJECTS**

IN BOSTON, 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. 606496

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Bridge Superstructure Replacement and Widening Project, B-16-052, Bowker Overpass over Mass Pike, MBTA/CSX, and Ipswich Street in **Boston**.

WHEN: October 26, 2023 | 6:00 – 7:30 PM

WHERE: [Mass.gov | Events](https://www.mass.gov/events)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Bridge Superstructure Replacement and Widening Project B-16-052, Bowker Overpass over Mass Pike, MBTA/CSX, and Ipswich Street in Boston. 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 replacing and widening the bridge superstructure of the existing Bowker Overpass bridge that spans over I-90, MBTA's Worcester Commuter Rail Line, and Ipswich Street and reconfiguring the ramps to and from Commonwealth Avenue. The project includes bridge widening to the west and the elimination of the existing down ramp structure that spans the Muddy River to Commonwealth Avenue. The proposed project will provide bridge and roadway safety improvements, increase vertical clearance, improve seismic resiliency, and enhance the public realm with improved multi-use pathway connections to the adjacent Charlesgate and Back Bay Fens parklands. MassDOT will use staged construction to maintain traffic and to accommodate utilities during construction.

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 massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7210, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Major Projects, Project File No. 606496. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business 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 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

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.

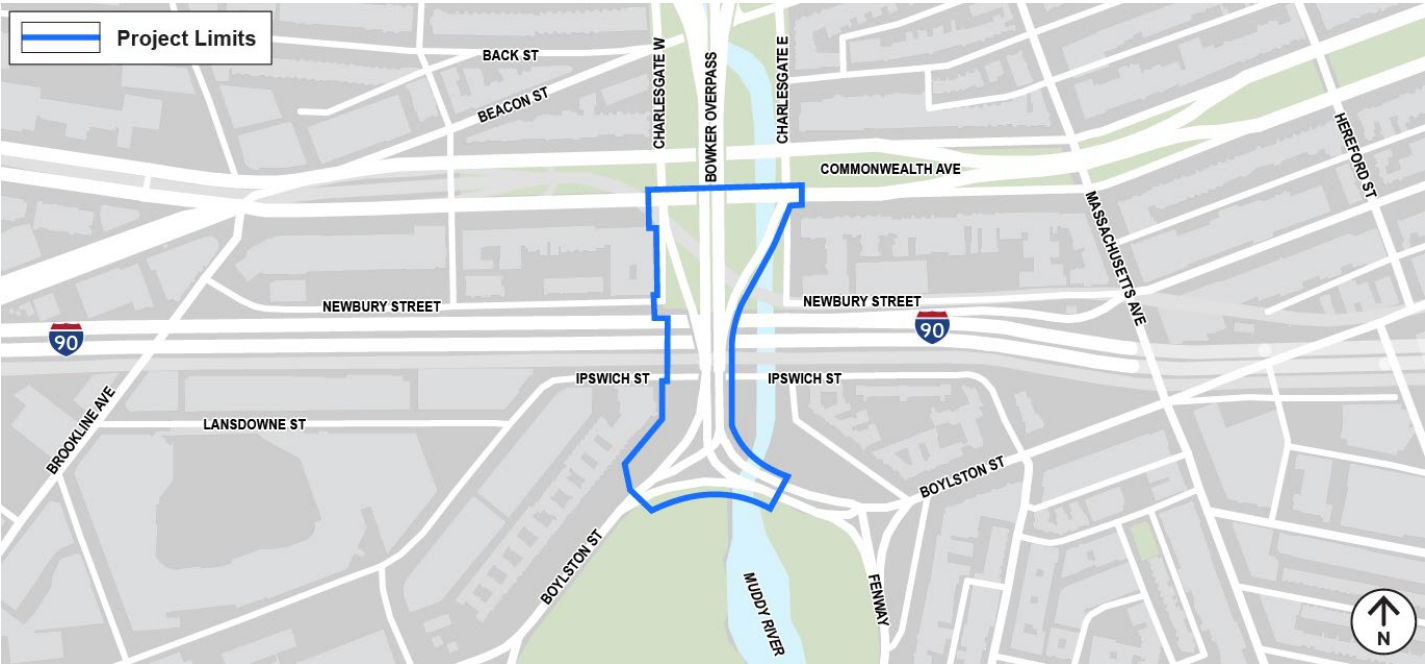
4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY HOUSE?

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.

Figure 1: Project Limits



Project Location:

The Bowker Overpass is a major connection across the Massachusetts Turnpike, carrying approximately 58,500 vehicles per day. The overpass bridge spans over I-90, MBTA's Worcester Commuter Rail Line, and Ipswich Street. It connects Boylston Street to Storow Drive. Additionally, the overpass connects to Commonwealth Avenue via two ramps, including a ramp structure that spans the Muddy River. The Bowker Overpass also provides a major pedestrian connection across the Turnpike and into the Back Bay Fens parklands.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to replace the deteriorating overpass with a new structure designed to improve safety, increase vertical clearance for freight movements, and enhance the public realm with improved pedestrian and bike pathway connections to adjacent parklands.

Existing Conditions:

The Bowker Overpass was constructed in 1964. In recent years, it has required significant, annual maintenance repairs due to deteriorating conditions. The overpass structure has reached the end of its useful lifespan and must be replaced to ensure the safe movement of vehicles and other users for decades to come.

Proposed Project:

The proposed project consists of replacing and widening the bridge superstructure of the existing Bowker Overpass bridge that spans over I-90, MBTA's Worcester Commuter Rail Line, and Ipswich Street and reconfiguring the ramps to and from Commonwealth Avenue. The project includes bridge widening to the west and the elimination of the existing down ramp structure that spans the Muddy River to Commonwealth Avenue. The proposed project will provide bridge and roadway safety improvements, increase vertical clearance, improve seismic resiliency, and enhance the public realm with improved multi-use pathway connections to the adjacent Charlesgate and Back Bay Fens parklands.

Maintenance of Traffic During Repairs:

MassDOT will use staged construction to maintain traffic over bridge throughout the duration of construction. Drivers can anticipate lane closures and during off-peak hours, short term roadway closures and rolling roadblocks on I-90 (MassPike).

Project Schedule:

The project plans on display are at the 25% preliminary design stage. Comments from the public hearing will be incorporated into the final design plans to the maximum extent possible. It is anticipated that the final design plans will be completed, and the project advertised for construction bids in summer 2024. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2025 and is anticipated to last 3.5 years.

Project Cost:

The estimated cost for this project is \$90 million.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Boston, MA
Bridge Superstructure Replacement and Widening Project, B-16-052, Bowker Overpass Over
Mass Pike, MBTA/CSX, and Ipswich Street
Project No. 606496

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

Carrie E. Lavalley, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Major Projects

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: Virtual Design Public Hearing
Bridge Superstructure Replacement and Widening Project, B-16-052, Bowker Overpass
Over Mass Pike, MBTA/CSX, and Ipswich Street
Project No. 606496
BOSTON
Attn: Major Projects

