VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 18, 2026

FOR THE PROPOSED

Reconstruction of John Fitch Highway
Project File No. 612242

IN THE CITY OF FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

MEGHAN HAGGERTY
ACTING 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: Fitchburg –Reconstruction of John Fitch Highway
Project File No. 612242

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

WHEN: 6:30PM, Wednesday, November 18th, 2026

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: This project focuses on a 1.0-mile segment of John Fitch Highway in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. The project will improve traffic circulation, enhance safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, and provide flood resiliency through stormwater infrastructure improvements. The project consists of full-depth pavement reconstruction of John Fitch Highway, two 11-foot vehicle travel lanes with 4-foot shoulders, sidewalks and curb ramps, midblock crosswalks with rectangular rapid-flashing beacons, bicycle accommodations, sustainable stormwater runoff treatment. Intersection improvements are proposed at Upham Street and the north and south driveways of Wallace Plaza. The project will also improve driveway access and turning movements to reduce conflict points and improve safety.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The city of Fitchburg 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. 612242 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.

MassDOT provides translation, interpretation, and other reasonable accommodations upon request. Requests should be made at least ten (10) business days prior to the event. Please contact MassDOT's Highway Project Accommodations office at MassDOTHighwayProjectAccommodations@dot.state.ma.us for your accommodation needs.

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

MEGHAN HAGGERTY
ACTING 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 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 improvements will also benefit the greater community and serve 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.

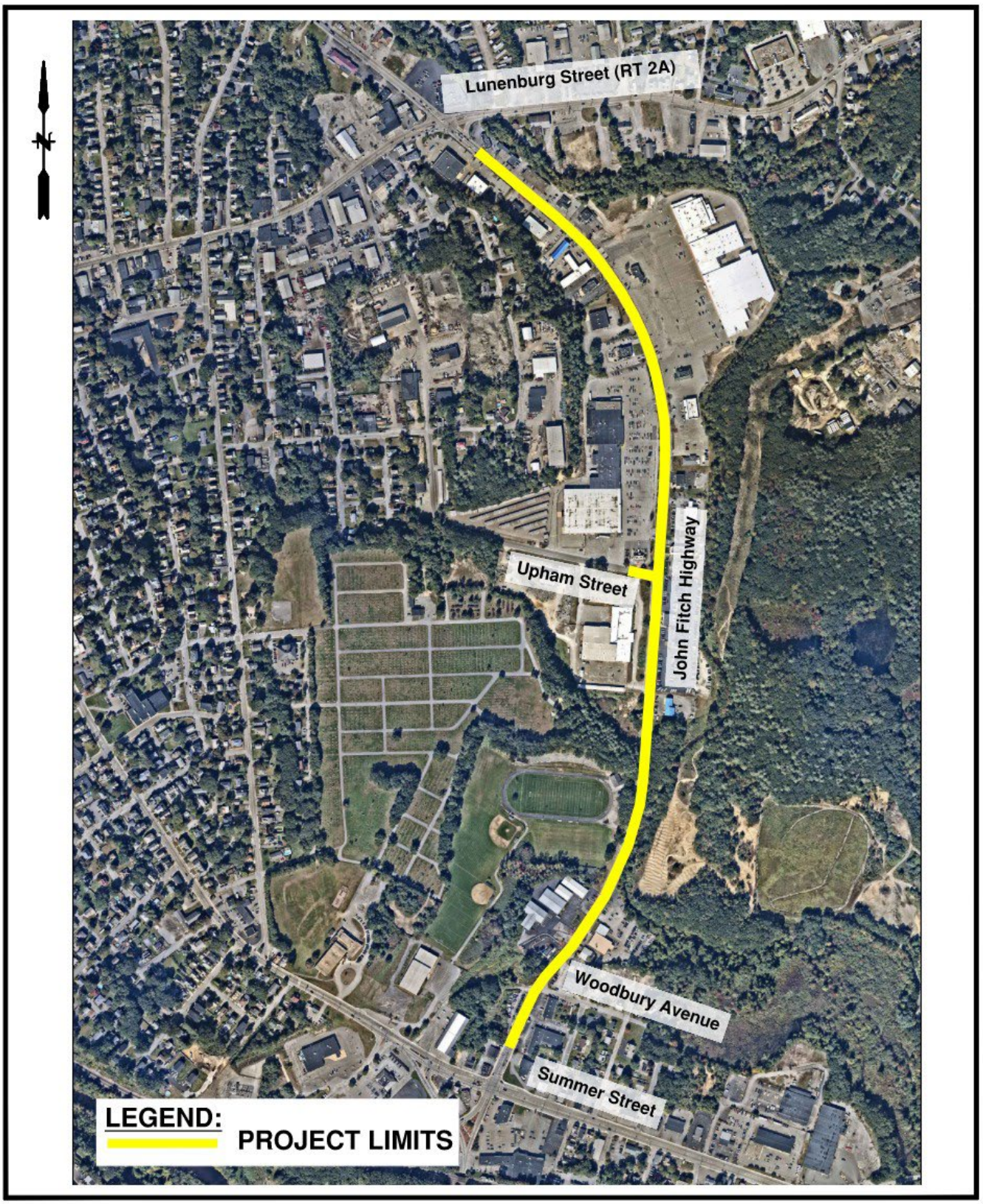
   A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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



FUSS & O'NEILL

612242 FITCHBURG - JOHN FITCH HIGHWAY LOCUS MAP

Project Summary: John Fitch Highway Corridor Improvements – Fitchburg, MA

The City of Fitchburg, in coordination with MassDOT, is advancing improvements to approximately 1.02 miles of John Fitch Highway, extending from approximately 200 feet north of Summer Street to approximately 100 feet south of Lunenburg Street. The project addresses existing traffic delays, safety concerns related to numerous and redundant driveways, inadequate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and frequent flooding within the corridor.

Project Goals

- Improve safety by organizing driveway access and turning movements to reduce conflict points and crashes.
- Implement a roadway diet to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.
- Provide accessible pedestrian facilities and improved bicycle accommodations.
- Improve flood resiliency through infiltration basins and green infrastructure.
- Modernize infrastructure assets along the corridor – New lighting, pavement, drainage, other utilities
- Streetscape improvements to enhance the aesthetics and provide more welcoming environment for transportation users – New tree belt with shade trees, perennial plantings, streetscape amenities such as benches, bike racks, directional signage.

Preferred Design Alternative

The proposed design includes a roadway diet and corridor improvements intended to enhance safety, accessibility, traffic operations, and stormwater management. Key features include:

- Full-depth pavement reconstruction of John Fitch Highway.
- Two 11-foot travel lanes with 4-foot shoulders and designated turn storage areas.
- Sidewalk reconstruction, ADA-compliant curb ramps, and shared-use paths along both sides of the roadway.
- Midblock crosswalks with rectangular rapid-flashing beacons.
- Improved driveway access and turning movements to reduce conflict points.
- Intersection improvements at Upham Street and the north and south driveways of Wallace Plaza.
- Tree belts and sustainable stormwater management measures to improve flood resiliency.

Utility Upgrades

- Stormwater management measures to address flooding concerns, specifically in the 507-516 block of John Fitch Highway where Falulah Brook frequently overtops its bank.

Conclusion

This project aims to improve safety and traffic operations along John Fitch Highway while providing more accessible and connected pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Through improved driveway access, intersection modifications, and a roadway diet, the project will reduce potential conflict points and enhance corridor functionality. Stormwater management improvements and green infrastructure will also help address existing flooding concerns and improve the corridor's long-term resiliency.

Anticipated Project Questions

Why are changes to driveway access proposed along John Fitch Highway?
The corridor currently has numerous wide, unnecessary, and redundant driveways that create additional conflict points between turning vehicles and through traffic. The project proposes to improve and reorganize driveway access to enhance safety and traffic circulation while maintaining necessary access to abutters properties. Having clear curb cuts also makes it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

What is a roadway diet, and why is it being proposed?
A roadway diet reallocates roadway space to improve safety and accommodate multiple transportation modes. The proposed design includes two 11-foot travel lanes, 4-foot shoulders, and designated turn storage areas to improve traffic operations. The road diet also allows for opportunity for tree belt and safe feeling of buffer between roadway and pedestrians and bicyclists on the shared-use path.

How will the project improve pedestrian and bicycle safety?
The project includes reconstructed sidewalks, pedestrian curb ramps, shared-use paths on both sides of John Fitch Highway, and midblock crosswalks with rectangular rapid-flashing beacons (RRFBs). These improvements will enhance accessibility and provide safer connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.

How will the project address flooding?
John Fitch Highway experiences frequent flooding due to its location within the floodplain and the historic path of Baker Brook. Proposed improvements include pavement reduction, green infrastructure, and infiltration basins to improve stormwater treatment and support flood resiliency.

Will access to businesses and properties be maintained during construction?
Access will be coordinated with adjacent businesses and property owners during construction. Temporary access changes or traffic control measures may be necessary as work progresses.

When is construction anticipated to start?
Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2029.

What are the anticipated road impacts during construction?
- Temporary lane closures and traffic shifts may be necessary
- Access to adjacent businesses and properties will be coordinated during construction.
- Pedestrian access and temporary sidewalk detours will be addressed through construction staging.
- Emergency vehicle access will be coordinated throughout construction.
- Night work may be required, subject to applicable approvals and restrictions.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Fitchburg, MA
Reconstruction of John Fitch Highway
Project File No. 612242

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.

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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
RECONSTRUCTION OF JOHN FITCH HIGHWAY
FITCHBURG
Project File No. 612242
Attn: Project Management