



**VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**DECEMBER 9, 2021**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**RIVER STREET OVER NORTH NASHUA RIVER SUPERSTRUCTURE  
REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

**Project No. 607680**

**Bridge No. F-04-010 (1KR)**

**Project Management**

**IN THE CITY OF FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

**JONATHAN GULLIVER  
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.  
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION**  
**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING MEETING**  
**Project File No. 607680**

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed River Street Bridge Superstructure Replacement project in **Fitchburg, MA**.

**WHEN: 7:00 pm, Thursday, December 9, 2021**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed River Street Bridge Superstructure Replacement 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 replacing the existing River Street Bridge over the North Nashua River. The approach work along River Street will extend from Main Street to approximately 40 feet from the opposite end of the bridge. Bicycle accommodations consisting of a 5-foot bicycle lane, tapering to 4.5 feet at Main Street to meet existing limits, have been provided in accordance with applicable design guides.

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., Acting Chief Engineer, via e-mail to [MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us) or via US Mail to Suite 6340, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: **Project Management**, Project File No. **607680**. 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 is posted to 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 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 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.  
ACTING 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. Lavalley, 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.

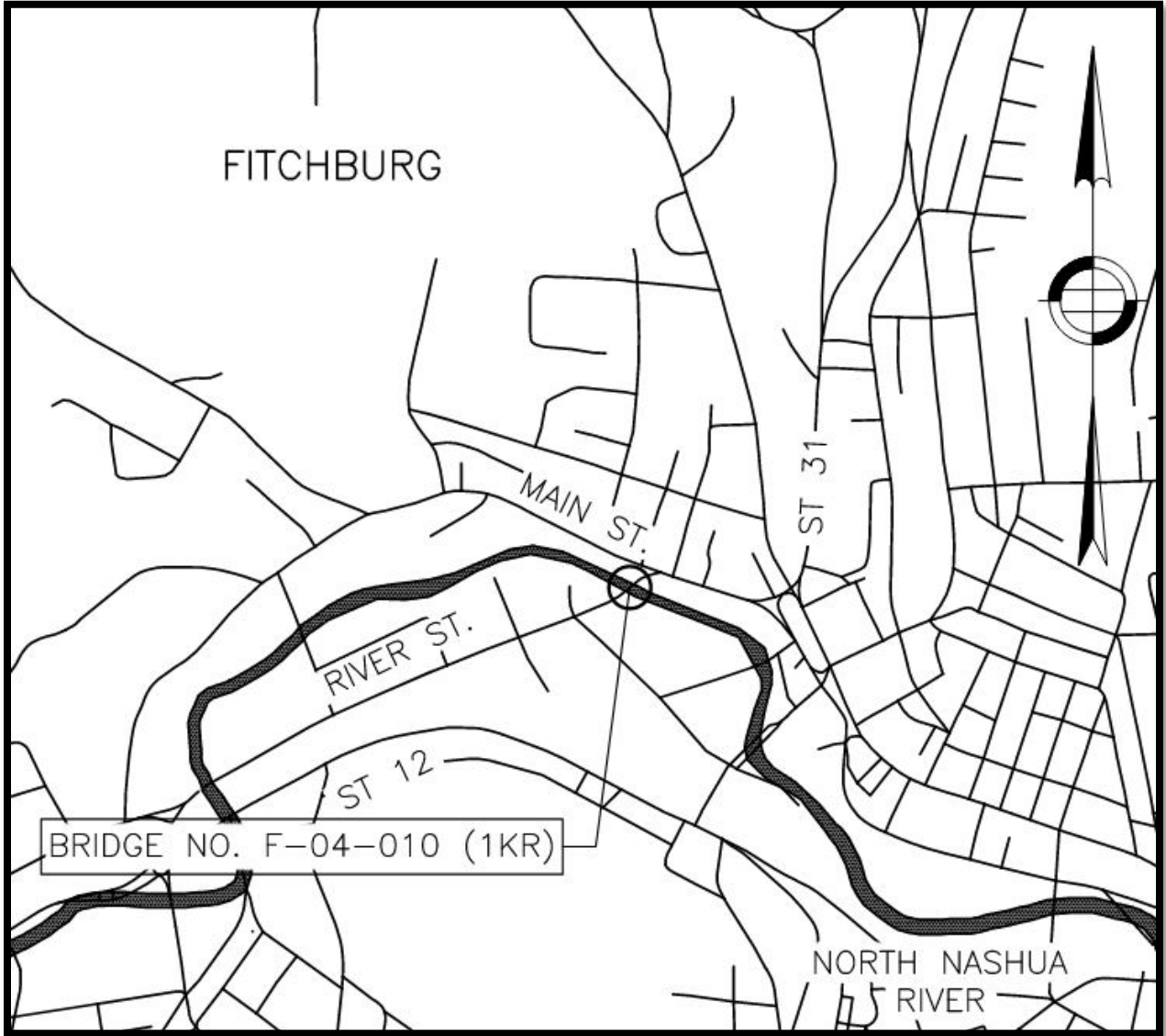
### 4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY HOUSE?

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



### **Project Location and Limits**

The project area extends along River Street from Main Street to about 40 feet south of the bridge over the North Nashua River.

### **Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to replace the existing structurally deficient bridge that carried River Street over the North Nashua River. The proposed project will increase the load carrying capacity of the bridge and improve vehicle and pedestrian safety in the area.

### **Existing Conditions**

River Street is a roadway with a single lane in each direction. The existing bridge concrete deck and sidewalks have scattered cracks with efflorescence, scaling and spalling along the fascias. The steel beams have multiple areas of section loss. The existing substructures have settlement cracks and scattered concrete spalling.

### **Proposed Improvements**

The work includes demolition of the existing bridge superstructure and portions of the abutments. The center pier will be retained and rehabilitated. New abutments will be built behind existing abutments. The approaches to the bridge will be reconstructed. The travel lane, bike lane and sidewalk configuration will remain the same as existing. The improvements include upgrading utilities carried by the bridge and construction of accessible ramps along River Street, which are consistent with standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### **Traffic Management**

The bridge will be constructed in two phases. During Phase 1, northbound traffic will continue along the northbound half of the existing bridge. The southbound half will be demolished and reconstructed in this phase. During Phase 2, northbound traffic will be re-routed along the newly constructed portion of the bridge. The northbound half will be demolished and reconstructed in this phase. During both phases, southbound traffic will be detoured at Main Street.

### **Utilities**

All utilities carried by the bridge will temporarily relocated to a utility bridge along the west side of the existing bridge during construction. The proposed bridge will carry a new water main, which will be maintained by the City of Fitchburg.

### **Right of Way**

The City of Fitchburg shall obtain the necessary rights to access property that is impacted by the construction of the improvements. Permanent Right of Way takings and Temporary Construction Easements will be required for this project.

### **Project Cost**

The cost of the proposed project is approximately \$6,500,000.

### **Project Status**

The design is currently at the 25% Design Stage. Comments received during the ten (10) day review period will be considered in determining the final design. The design is anticipated to be completed in the spring of 2023 and construction is anticipated to be completed by the fall of 2025.





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

RE: Virtual Public Hearing  
River Street over North Nashua River Superstructure Replacement  
**FITCHBURG**  
Project File No. 607680  
Attn: Project Management

