



**VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**June 16, 2026**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**North Central Pathway Extension**

**Project No. 613260**

**Project Management**

**IN THE CITY OF GARDNER, 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 VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

**Project Description: Gardner – North Central Pathway Extension**  
**Project File No. 613260**

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

WHEN: 6:00 PM, Tuesday, June 16, 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: The North Central Pathway Extension is designed to enhance pedestrian and bicycle accessibility by completing a shared-use path (SUP) that will connect downtown Winchendon with downtown Gardner. This project will reuse a former railbed, transforming it into a 10- to 12-foot-wide asphalt path that promotes safe, healthy transportation options between the two communities. The path will begin at the former railbed, at the terminus of a recently completed city-led SUP project, near Jackson Street and extend approximately 1.5 miles north to Green Street (State Route 140). Project limits will be coordinated with the adjacent SUP bridge project (#609108) over Route 140.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The City 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. Lavalley, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to [MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us) or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 613260. 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.

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 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 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. 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

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).

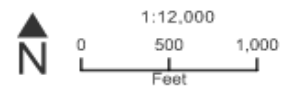
### 5. MUST I ACCEPT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFER?

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.

LOCUS MAP



— Limit of Work



## Project Goals

- ADA Accessibility
  - Paved trail will provide smooth graded surface, meeting ADA standards
  - Trail currently can become muddy and hard to traverse
- Multi-Modal Accommodation
  - Portions of existing path are too narrow for travel in two directions
  - Maintain occasional use by National Grid
- User Safety
  - Protection along steep embankments along portions of path
  - Improved trail crossing at Park Street
- Connectivity
  - North Central Pathway
  - Crystal Lake Cemetery (“Nature Trail”)
  - Perley Brook Hiking trails

The North Central Pathway project will reuse a former railbed, transforming it into a 10- to 12-foot-wide asphalt path. Once constructed, the path will help connect downtown Winchendon with downtown Gardner. The start of the project is at the bottom of the map, which connects to the previously built “Nature Trail” shared-use path by the Crystal Lake Cemetery. The project will go north (or up on the map), crossing Park Street, eventually terminating about 500 feet south of Route 140 crossing. This project will connect with the bicycle and pedestrian bridge project over Route 140 – MassDOT Project File No. 609108. The project that is being presented tonight will have a total length of 1.45 miles. Please keep in mind that within the project area, there are several National Grid-owned utility facilities.



Please Fold and Tape



Please Place  
Appropriate  
Postage Here

Carrie E. Lavalley, P.E.  
Acting Chief Engineer  
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Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Virtual Public Hearing  
North Central Pathway Extension  
**CITY OF GARDNER**  
Project File No. 613260  
Attn: Project Management

