



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

APRIL 22, 2021

FOR THE PROPOSED

**BORDER TO BOSTON TRAIL, FROM GEORGETOWN ROAD TO WEST MAIN STREET
(ROUTE 97)**

Project Management

IN THE TOWNS OF GEORGETOWN & BOXFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

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

**JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING MEETING
Project File No. 607542

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be published on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed BORDER TO BOSTON TRAIL, FROM GEORGETOWN ROAD TO WEST MAIN STREET (ROUTE 97) project in **Georgetown and Boxford, MA.**

WHEN: **Thursday, April 22, 2021**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed BORDER TO BOSTON TRAIL, FROM GEORGETOWN ROAD TO WEST MAIN STREET (ROUTE 97) 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 the construction of The Border to Boston Trail in the Towns of Boxford and Georgetown. The corridor extends from Georgetown Road in Boxford north to West Main Street (Route 97) in Georgetown. The trail is approximately 2.3 miles and will be comprised entirely of an off-road shared use trail facility utilizing former railroad corridor. The Southern Georgetown section will make up part of the larger Border to Boston Trail system which is nearly 30 miles in length and links eight Essex County communities.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The **town** 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 Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 6340, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: **Project Management**, Project File No. **607541**. 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). 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 Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, 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,

Patricia A Leavenworth, 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.

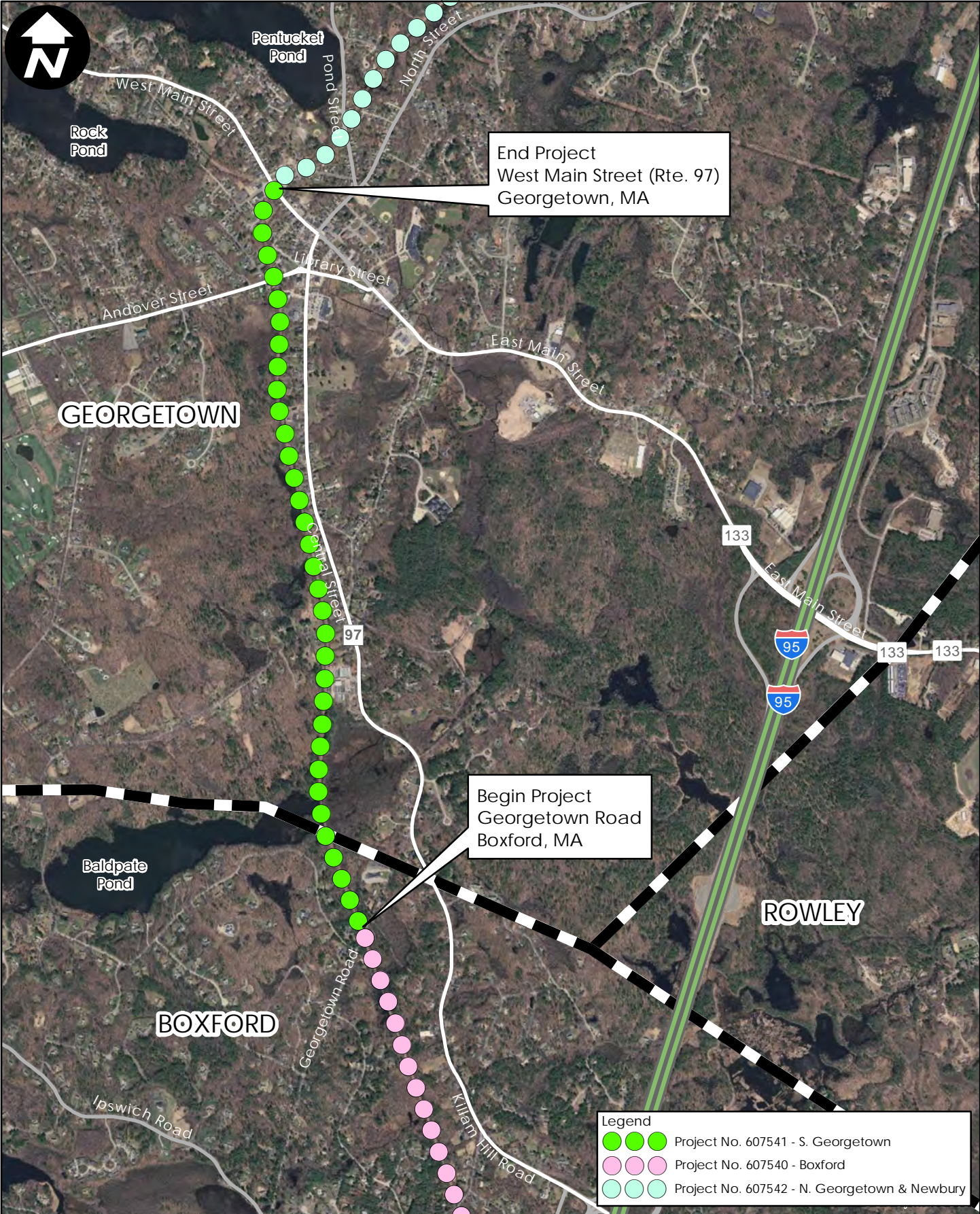
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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



End Project
West Main Street (Rte. 97)
Georgetown, MA

Begin Project
Georgetown Road
Boxford, MA

- Legend**
- Project No. 607541 - S. Georgetown
 - Project No. 607540 - Boxford
 - Project No. 607542 - N. Georgetown & Newbury

Map Source: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS)
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Border to Boston Trail – Southern Georgetown Section Project in Boxford & Georgetown

PROJECT LOCATION

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Highway Division (MassDOT) is proposing construction of a shared-use path in Boxford and Georgetown, MA. The route follows the former railroad right-of-way from Georgetown Road in Boxford north to West Main Street (Route 97) in Georgetown. The total project length is approximately 2.3 miles comprised of off-road trail.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

This project seeks to improve the safety of bicycle and pedestrian movements by providing an alternative transportation corridor that connects users with recreational facilities, the downtown business district, and scenic areas. The creation of this facility will also improve regional bicycle connectivity as this project will be part of the larger Border to Boston Trail network. The objective of this project is to reduce congestion and improve air quality by converting some motorized traffic to non-motorized in this area. The proposed project consists of constructing a 10-ft wide shared-use path along the former railroad corridor with a hot mix asphalt trail surface. A high intensity activated crosswalk pedestrian signal, signs, pavement markings and wheelchair ramps are proposed at the grade crossings of Andover Street (Route 133) and West Main Street (Route 97). A bicycle/pedestrian bridge crossing is proposed to span over a culvert along the corridor.

RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

The majority of the path follows the former railroad right of way. Some properties may require permanent acquisitions by the Towns of Boxford and Georgetown to accommodate the proposed shared use path and grading. Temporary construction easements are also required in certain locations where the proposed work meets existing ground. Temporary construction easements allow for grading and ramp construction for access to the proposed path. MassDOT's policy regarding land acquisitions will be discussed at the meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The proposed project has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts to adjacent resource areas. A Notice of Intent application will be filed with the Boxford and Georgetown Conservation Commissions for the proposed work occurring within wetland resource areas.

MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC DURING CONSTRUCTION

It is the intent of this project that all streets remain open to traffic at all times during construction. However, some lane reductions may be required to facilitate the construction process at each roadway crossing.

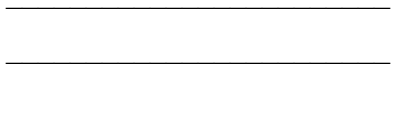
PROJECT COST

The project construction cost is estimated to be approximately \$2.8 million and will be funded using a combination of State and Federal funds.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

This project has been programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for Federal Fiscal Year 2022. The design plans displayed at this meeting are at the 25% Design Stage of completion (Preliminary Design Stage). Comments made at this public meeting will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E.
Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Virtual Public Hearing
BORDER TO BOSTON TRAIL, FROM GEORGETOWN ROAD TO WEST MAIN
STREET (ROUTE 97)
Georgetown, MA & Boxford, MA
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Attn: Project Management

