



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 19, 2025

FOR THE PROPOSED

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, STATE ROAD (ROUTES 7/23) OVER THE HOUSATONIC RIVER

Project No. 609430

Bridge Nos G-11-014

Project Management

IN THE TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON, 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 DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 609430**

A Design Public Hearing will be held to present the design for the proposed project in Great Barrington, MA.

WHERE: Great Barrington Fire Department
37 State Road,
Great Barrington, MA-01230

WHEN: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 @ 6:30 pm

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 proposed project consists of a superstructure replacement of Bridge No. G-11-014, which spans State Road (Routes US 7/ST 23) over the Housatonic River in Great Barrington. This bridge currently presents structural deficiencies and lacks the necessary width to adequately accommodate existing traffic volumes, further compounded by its limited load-carrying capacity. Accessibility and safety for all users, the design includes provisions for shared-use accommodation for both pedestrians and cyclists. Specifically, the proposal incorporates two (2) shared-use sidewalks, adhering to all applicable design standards.

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. Lavalley, 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. 609430. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted on 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 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.

In case of inclement weather, a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEY, 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

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?

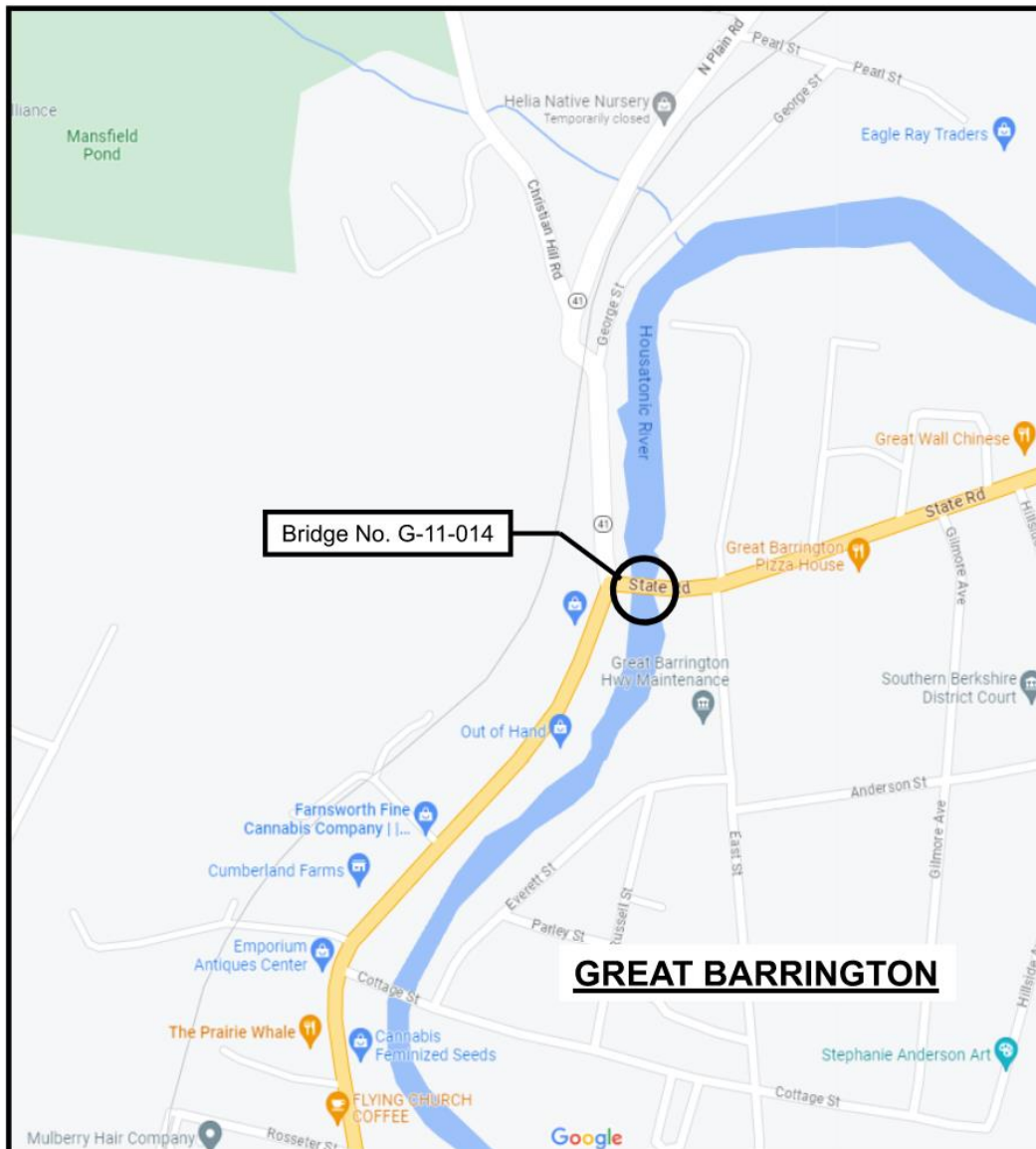
The owner will have the opportunity to buy back his or her house, provided he or she has a location to which it can be moved, and the proper permits for its removal. If the owner does not wish to repurchase, the house will be advertised for bids. The highest bidder, who must also have a location and 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: Locus Map

Great Barrington – State Road over Housatonic River



LOCATION MAP
NOT TO SCALE

Figure 2: Existing Conditions



Figure 3: Recent Cleaning and Painting Hides Critical Section Loss



Figure 4: Proposed Bridge Cross-Section

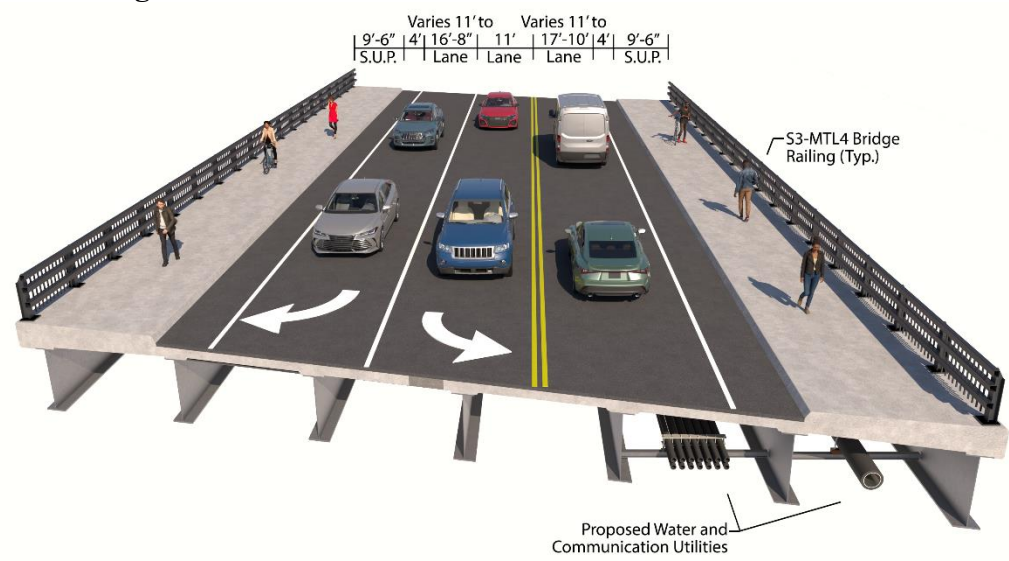
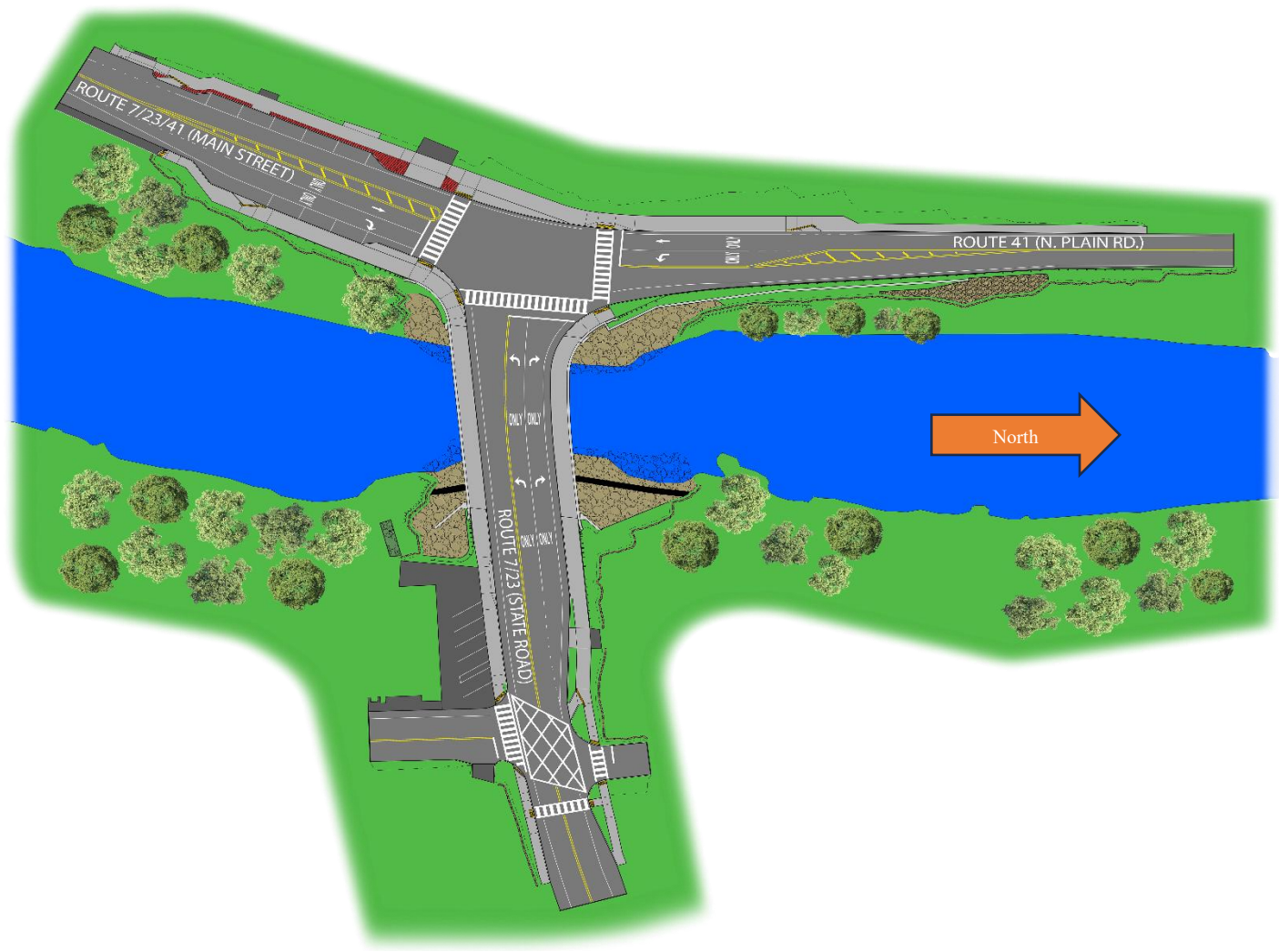


Figure 5: Proposed Roadway Realignment and Intersection Improvements



Project Location

The project is located just east of the intersection of State Road (MA Route 7/23), North Plain Road, and Main Street over the Housatonic River in the Town of Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Today's structure is a steel truss bridge which provides a single lane of traffic in each direction and a sidewalk on the bridge's north side. There is no pedestrian accommodation on the structure's south side or bicycle accommodations.

The State Road Bridge is a vital connector in Great Barrington especially for commercial vehicles. To the east, State Road is home to an array of local businesses, local houses of worship, and the South Berkshire District Court. To the west, traffic can turn left onto Main Street and travel into the center of Great Barrington which is where key municipal buildings such as Town Hall and the Public Library are located as well as a broad array of commercial services. In addition, the bridge carries a water main and telecommunications cables. The structure is of particular importance given the condition and location of other crossings of the Housatonic in Great Barrington. To the north, the Division Street Bridge presents traffic with an approximately 6-mile detour. To the south, the Cottage Street Bridge is closed to traffic and the Bridge Street Bridge is weight limited.

Project Purpose

The existing State Road Bridge opened to traffic in 1931. It's foundations include masonry elements of an earlier crossing for which there are no records. The trusses which hold up the bridge have no protection from accidental vehicle impacts. The bridge was cleaned and painted during a rehabilitation project in 2019, however this cosmetic improvement hides critical metal loss in the structure's trusses and connections. Even with the work done in 2019, the bridge remains weight limited and, despite its importance in the movement of freight by truck, its configuration makes it difficult for trucks traveling west to make the left turn towards the center of Great Barrington. Having evaluated the structure and noted its challenges, MassDOT has determined that a full replacement is warranted.

The project will also include the reconstruction of the intersection of State Road, North Plain Road, and Main Street. Under this proposal, the westbound approach of State Road would consist of a dedicated left turn lane and a dedicated right turn lane. The western end of the bridge would be wider than its eastern end to accommodate turning trucks. Providing a dedicated turning lane will also help to relieve peak hour traffic congestion which today can stretch beyond the intersection with Avery Lane. The intersection will be upgraded with crosswalks on all three approaches, all new signal equipment, and ADA upgrades to meet current accessibility standards.

The proposed new bridge will be a steel, plate girder structure giving it a similar appearance to the existing bridge. When replaced, the cross-section would include:

- An eastbound lane
- A westbound left turn lane
- A westbound right turn lane
- 4-foot shoulders on both sides of the bridge
- 9-foot, 6-inch shared use paths on both sides of the bridge.

Existing Conditions

The existing bridge is a steel Parker Pony Truss dating from 1931. In 2022, it carried an average of 14,979 vehicles every 24-hours of which 5% were trucks or buses. The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Route 21 uses the bridge as part of its route, 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. The bridge was rehabilitated in the 1980's and most recently in 2019. Even with the most recent rehabilitation, the structure remains weight limited due to significant loss of steel in critical components. It does not adequately meet the needs of vehicular, pedestrian, or cycling traffic and its full replacement is warranted.

The intersection of State Road, North Plain Road, and Main Street is signalized intersection with three approaches. The westbound approach of State Road consists of a shared left-turn/right-turn lane. The

northbound approach of Main Street includes a dedicated through lane and an exclusive right-turn lane. The southbound approach of North Plain Road consists of a shared through/left-turn lane. A crosswalk is only provided on the North Plain Road approach.

Maintenance of Traffic During Construction

Truss bridges, like the State Road Bridge, depend on both trusses, the structures visible above the roadway deck for structural strength. As such, they are typically replaced with a full closure, followed by demolition, and construction of a new crossing. Given the importance of the State Road Bridge, a custom “strongback” girder will be used to take the place of the existing bridge’s south truss allowing for a portion of the structure to be removed while traffic is maintained on it. The first portion of the replacement structure can then be built just to the south of today’s bridge.

Once the first portion of the new bridge is in place, traffic will be shifted onto it, and the remaining section of today’s bridge will be demolished allowing the rest of the replacement bridge to be built in the vacated space. A lane of traffic in each direction will be maintained throughout construction as will a single sidewalk. Given the limits of available space on the bridge, cyclists will be asked to either ride with traffic or dismount and walk their bicycles across the sidewalk.

The result of the staged construction will be that bridge and the intersection of State Road, North Plain Road, and Main Street will all shift slightly to the south of their current locations. However, the impacts of this shift will be significantly less than a discarded concept for construction staging which would have constructed all of the replacement bridge to the south of today’s bridge and opening the new structure to traffic in advance of demolishing the 1931 bridge.

Anticipated Project Milestones

- Respond to 25% Design Public Hearing comments – Fall/Winter 2025
- 75% design milestone – Spring 2026
- 100% design milestone – Summer 2026
- Advertise project to potential contractors – Fall 2027
- Begin construction – Winter 2027/28
- Complete construction – Mid-2030

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

GREAT BARRINGTON MA
BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, STATE ROAD (ROUTES 7/23) OVER
THE HOUSATONIC RIVER
Project File No. 609430

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. Lavalley, 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.

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: Public Hearing
BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, STATE ROAD (ROUTES 7/23) OVER
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GREAT BARRINGTON
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