



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

JUNE 12, 2024

FOR THE PROPOSED

**Harwich Elementary School Safe Routes To School Improvements
Project No. 610670**

IN THE TOWN OF HARWICH, 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 PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 610670

A Design Public Hearing will be held to present the design for the proposed Harwich Elementary School Safe Routes To School project in Harwich, MA.

WHERE: Harwich Community Center, Multi-Purpose Room
100 Oak Street
Harwich, MA 02645

WHEN: **Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 6:00pm**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Safe Routes To School project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The scope of work is to implement sidewalk and shared-use path infrastructure improvements/upgrades for pedestrians and bicyclists in the area immediately adjacent and contiguous to the Harwich Elementary School (HES) located at 263 South Street and continuing to Harwich Center. The project as currently proposed runs along South Street in a northerly direction from the School House Drive at South Street intersection to the South Street at Main Street intersection, then along Main Street in an easterly direction to the Main Street at Sisson Road intersection, then along Sisson Road in a southerly and southwesterly direction to the Sisson Road at School House Drive intersection. The proposed scope of work also includes the construction of accessible curb ramps with crosswalks, limited signage improvements, and landscaping limited to loam and seed for areas disturbed by construction.

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 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. 610670. 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 takes place.

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. 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 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.



Project Description

The project entails pedestrian facility improvements under the MassDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program for the Harwich Elementary School. The project limits generally include approximately 0.20 mile of South Street from School House Drive to Main Street, approximately 0.40 mile of Main Street from South Street to Sisson Road, and approximately 0.35 mile of Sisson Road from Main Street to School House Drive. School House Drive provides access to and from both sides of the school, connecting to the main part of Town.

The proposed work includes several pedestrian facility improvements along South Street, Main Street, and Sisson Road. The improvements include the following:

- **Increase pedestrian safety and walkability along the roadways.** Opportunities for improving pedestrian safety and accessibility include replacing the existing sidewalk along the east side of South Street between School House Drive and Main Street with an eight (8)-foot-wide grade-separated bituminous sidewalk, reconstructing sidewalk along the south side of Main Street between South Street and Sisson Road to be five (5) feet wide, reconstructing sidewalk along the east side of Sisson Road between Main Street and Parallel Street to be five (5) feet wide, and reconstructing the existing sidewalk along the west side of Sisson Road between Parallel Street and School House Drive to be five (5) feet wide. Additionally, a new segment of five (5)-foot wide sidewalk will be constructed on the east side of Sisson Road between Parallel Street and The Arts Center. The sidewalk along Main Street will be separated from the roadway by a three (3)-foot-wide grass buffer. Improvements to existing sidewalks include constructing new and upgrading existing pedestrian curb ramps to be ADA/AAB-compliant and installing rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs). These modifications are anticipated to enhance pedestrian safety, accessibility, and mobility. High-visibility MassDOT-standard continental-style crosswalks will be striped at each intersection with pedestrian crossings.
- **Increase bicycle safety and accessibility along the roadways.** Opportunities for improving bicycle safety and accessibility include replacing the existing sidewalk network on the east side of South Street with an 8-foot-wide grade separated bituminous sidewalk. The widening of this facility will provide increased bicycle safety for students and general public traveling along South Street.
- **Improve curbing on roadways.** Both granite curb and Cape Cod bituminous berm will be installed along the locations of sidewalk reconstruction within the study limits.
- **Install RRFBs on Main Street and Sisson Road.** Two (2) rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) are proposed on Main Street. The first RRFB is proposed slightly east of the intersection of Main Street and Uncle Harry's Road and the other is to be installed slightly west of the intersection of Main Street and Island Pond Road. The RRFB on Sisson Road is proposed at the southern crossing at the intersection of Sisson Road and Parallel Street. The purpose of the RRFBs is to enhance pedestrian/bicyclist safety at the crossings.

The total anticipated cost of the Project is \$2,417,460.30. The Project is expected to advertise for bidding in the Summer of 2025. Construction is anticipated to start in the Spring of 2026 and last for two construction seasons. Traffic and access to all direct abutters will be maintained during construction.

Please Fold and Tape



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

RE: Design Public Hearing
Harwich Elementary School Safe Routes To School Improvements
HARWICH
Project File No. 610670
Attn: Project Management

