



**VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**Jacksonville Stage Road (State Route 8A) over the West Branch Brook  
Project No. 607678  
Project Management**

**IN THE TOWN OF HEATH, 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. 607678

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Jacksonville Stage Road (SR 8A) over the West Branch Brook project in Heath, MA.

WHEN: 6:30 PM, Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Jacksonville Stage Road (SR 8A) over the West Branch Brook bridge replacement project in Heath, MA. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project will provide a complete bridge replacement of the existing bridge carrying Jacksonville Stage Road (SR 8A) over the West Branch Brook in Heath, MA. The existing bridge was constructed in 1939 and is in poor condition due to its age. The intent of the proposed design is to replace the bridge to improve accessibility for all users. Presently, there are no existing shoulders on the bridge. The proposed improvements include lengthening of the bridge span and widening of the bridge width so that 3.0' shoulders are provided for improved bicycle accommodation and accessibility. There are no sidewalks on the bridge nor off the bridge, both in the existing and proposed conditions.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Town of Heath 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. 607678. 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.  
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

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.

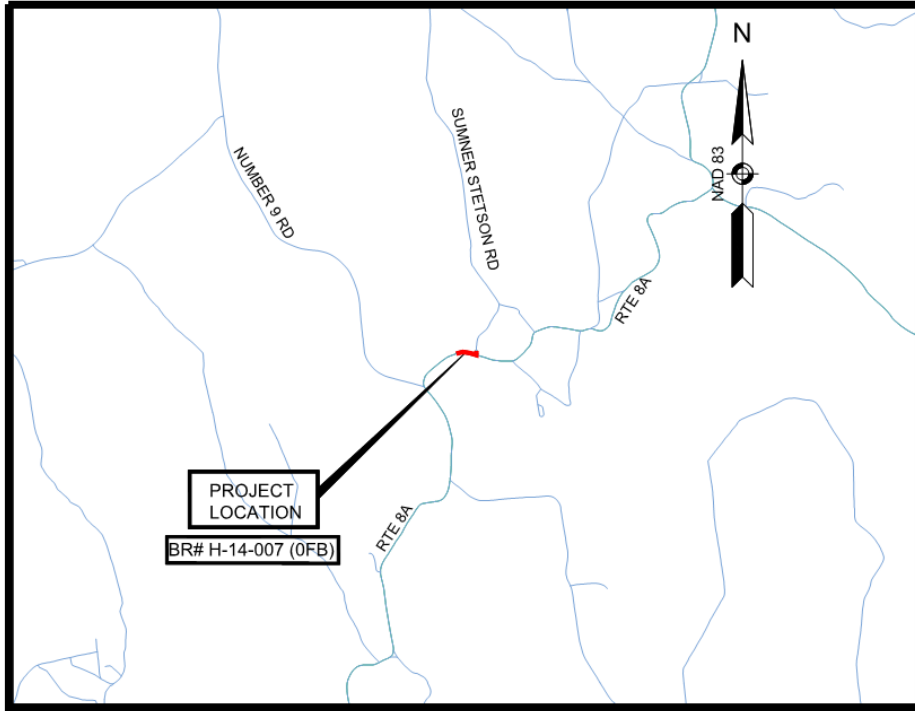
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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



**BRIDGE REPLACEMENT  
PROJECT NO. 607678  
JACKSONVILLE STAGE ROAD (ROUTE 8A)  
OVER THE WEST BRANCH BROOK**

**Proposed Purpose:**

The proposed project will provide a complete bridge replacement of the existing bridge carrying Jacksonville Stage Road (State Route 8A) over the West Branch Brook in Heath, MA. The bridge is located approximately 200 feet west of Sumner Stetson Road and is bounded by a residence to the west and wooded land to the north, south, and east. Jacksonville Stage Road (Route 8A) is classified as a rural roadway with a low volume of traffic that runs in the east-west directions as it crosses West Branch Brook. The entire roadway is undivided without pavement markings, with one travel lane in each direction. There is a horizontal roadway curve on Jacksonville Stage Road (Route 8A) at the western approach of the bridge. The existing bridge was constructed in 1939 and is in poor condition due to its age. Presently, there are no existing shoulders, sidewalks, or pavement markings on the bridge. Though short-term repairs have been previously implemented, a long-term solution is needed. The purpose or intent of this project is to reconstruct the bridge to bring it to a state of good repair and meet current design standards, which in turn improves accessibility for all users.

**Proposed Improvements and Extent of Work:**

The proposed improvements include the full replacement of the bridge and reconstruction of the approach roadway sections. The work on this project will include improvements to the approach roadways that extend approximately 206 feet to the west of the bridge and approximately 234 feet to the east of the bridge. The resulting total project length is approximately 495 feet. The proposed bridge will consist of four concrete box beams with a concrete deck and steel bridge railings. The proposed bridge will be widened from 24 feet to 28 feet to provide two 11-foot-wide travel lanes (one in each direction) and 3-foot-wide shoulders on both sides of the bridge. By widening the bridge, shoulders are provided for improved bicycle accommodation and accessibility and the proposed bridge will be shifted 1 foot to the north which better the sight distance at the west approach roadway curve. The proposed bridge will also be lengthened, from 25 feet to 55 feet, and the above-ground portion of the west abutment removed. In lengthening the bridge and removing this part of the west abutment, the waterway channel below will be widened which decreases the flood elevation and allows for better environmental access and habitat for endangered species.

**Environmental Impacts**

There are no negative environmental, cultural resource, nor community impacts anticipated for this project, and coordination with the appropriate agencies will be provided throughout the process.

**BRIDGE REPLACEMENT  
PROJECT NO. 607678  
JACKSONVILLE STAGE ROAD (ROUTE 8A)  
OVER THE WEST BRANCH BROOK**

**Right of Way**

There are very minor Right-Of-Way (ROW) impacts associated with the utilities on Town-owned property, with the exception of one temporary service utility pole to maintain utility service to the abutting residential property.

**Traffic Management**

Phased or staged construction is proposed to complete this project. The traffic management approach to be implemented during the bridge reconstruction will be for one alternating travel lane to serve both directions of travel on Jacksonville Stage Road by means of a temporary traffic signal. A detour route will be implemented and utilized only for necessary, limited overnight full bridge closures.

**Project Status and Schedule**

The bridge project is at the 25% Highway Bridge Sketch Plan design stage. Comments from this Public Hearing will be taken into consideration to the maximum extent possible.

**Project Cost**

The estimated total construction cost is approximately \$6,000,000.



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Heath, MA  
Jacksonville Stage Road (State Route 8A) over the West Branch Brook  
Project File No. 607678

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](mailto: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.**

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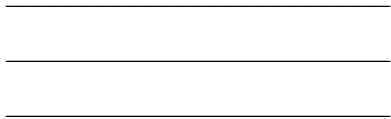
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Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

RE: Live Virtual Design Public Hearing  
Jacksonville Stage Road (State Route 8A) over the West Branch Brook  
**TOWN OF HEATH**  
Project File No. 607678  
Attn: Project Management

