

DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

AT

**HILTON DOUBLETREE HOTEL
99 ERDMAN WAY**

LEOMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS

6:30 PM

**FOR THE PROPOSED
Twin Cities Rail Trail Project
MassDOT Project No. 608193**

**IN THE CITIES OF LEOMINSTER AND
FITCHBURG, 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
Project File No. 608193

A Design Public Hearing will be held by MassDOT to discuss the proposed Twin Cities Rail Trail project in Fitchburg and Leominster, MA.

WHERE: Double Tree Hotel
99 Erdman Way
Leominster, MA 01453

WHEN: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 @ 6:30 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Twin Cities Rail Trail project. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of constructing a 12-foot wide shared use accessible paved path along an abandoned commercial rail corridor between the urban centers of Fitchburg and Leominster, approximately 4.5 miles in length. Both project phases 1 and 2 will be discussed at the hearing.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The cities are responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be discussed at this hearing.

Written views received by MassDOT subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five (5) days prior to the date of the hearing shall be displayed for public inspection and copying at the time and date listed above. Plans will be on display one-half hour before the hearing begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project. A project handout will be made available on the MassDOT website listed below.

Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the Public Hearing regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: **Roadway Project Management, Project File No. 608193**. Such submissions will also be accepted at the hearing. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked within ten (10) business days of this Public Hearing. Project inquiries may be emailed to dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us

This location is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), fax (857-368-0602), TTD/TTY (857-368-0603) 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 (10) business days before the meeting.

In case of inclement weather, hearing cancellation announcements will be posted on the internet at <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Highway/>

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 ISSUES

A secure right of way is necessary for this project. Temporary construction easements may be required. Your *municipality* is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. If your property is affected, your rights are fully protected under law.

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?

City officials will often seek donations, of parcels, where permanent rights are required. This procedure will minimize the acquisition cost for your community.

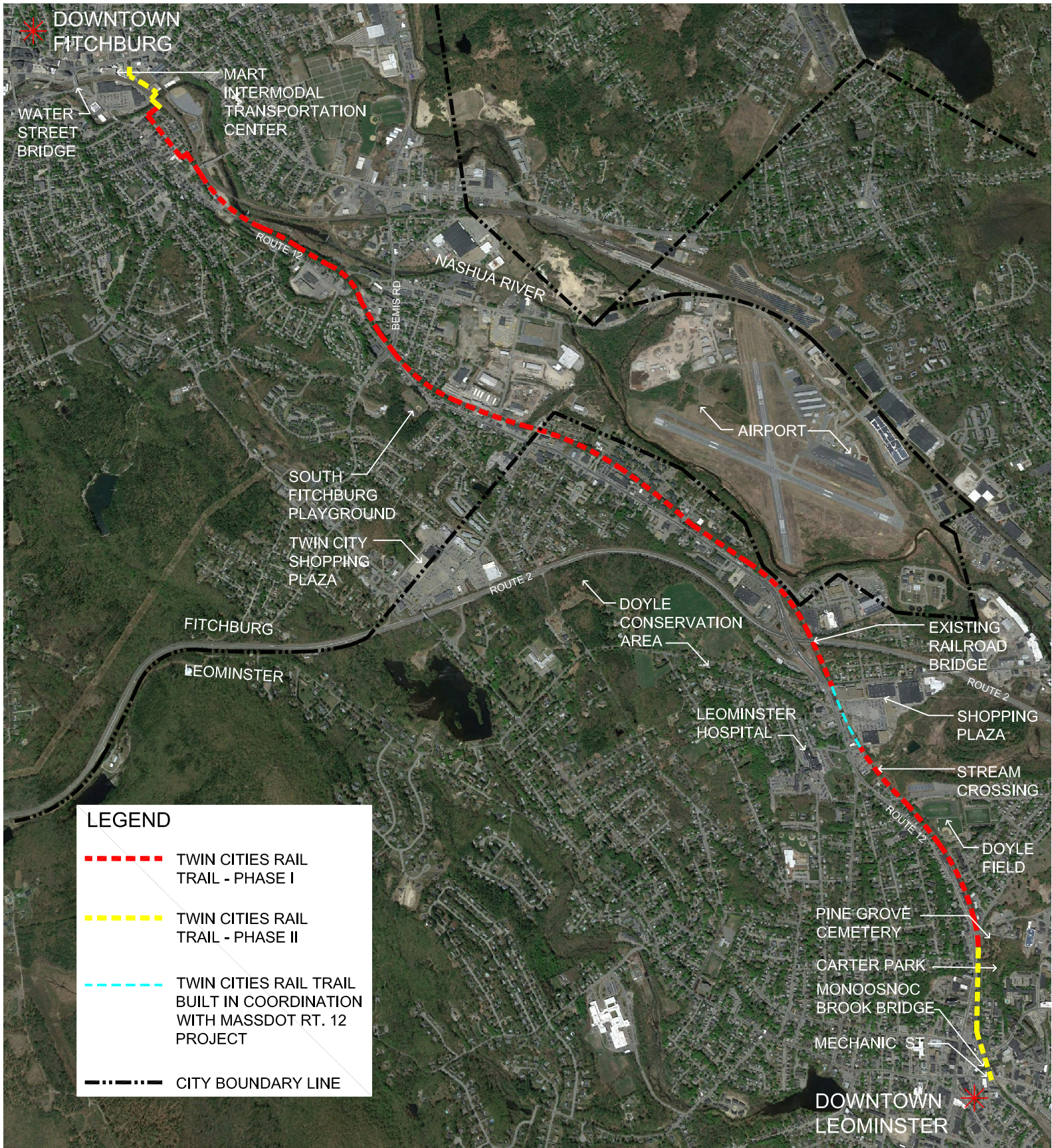
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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

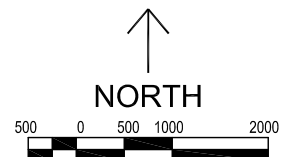
5. MUST I ACCEPT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFER?

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.



TWIN CITIES RAIL TRAIL - LEOMINSTER & FITCHBURG ,MA PROJECT AREA LOCUS MAP

FEBRUARY 2019



Twin Cities Rail Trail in Fitchburg and Leominster, MA

PROJECT LOCATION

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Highway Division (MassDOT) and the Cities of Leominster and Fitchburg propose the construction of a shared-use trail along an abandoned railroad corridor from its intersection with Mechanic Street in Leominster to The MART Intermodal Transportation Center in Fitchburg. The total length of the project is approximately 4.7 miles, and the trail intersects with 15 roads or driveways between the termini.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The purpose of this Project is to provide safer and improved transportation access for bicycle users and pedestrians. This project seeks to accomplish this through the construction of a shared-use trail facility for bicycle and pedestrian users via the former railroad corridor, which connects the central business districts of Leominster and Fitchburg.

As envisioned, this regional trail will connect areas of cultural, economic, social, and natural significance along the multi-community corridor and provide a non-motorized transportation and recreational alternative for people of all ages and abilities.

RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

The proposed improvements will require temporary and possibly permanent easements from adjacent property owners for construction of the proposed path, side slopes and landscape features. The Cities of Leominster and Fitchburg are responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private and public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisition will be discussed at this hearing.

The project will be phased based on the Right-of-Way obtained for construction. The intent is to construct as much of the project in Phase I as ROW will allow and then complete the project in Phase II.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Along the project corridor the design envisions impacts to Wetland Buffer and the need to file for a Construction NOI (in both Leominster and Fitchburg), an ENF, a 4(f) permit and Ch 91 license.

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 the trail head and discontinued access road.

PROJECT COST

The preliminary construction cost of this project at this design stage is approximately \$18,000,000 for both Phase 1 and 2.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The design plans presented this evening are at the 25% design stage. Phase 1 Design, permitting, and right of way acquisition must be completed by this summer for a September 2019 advertisement. Construction is anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2020 for Phase 1.

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: Public Hearing
Twin Cities Rail Trail Project
LEOMINSTER AND FITCHBURG
Project File No. 608193
Roadway Project Management

