



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

December 7, 2021

FOR THE PROPOSED

**Blueberry Hill Elementary School Improvements (Safe Routes To School)
Project No. 609517
Project Management**

IN THE TOWN OF LONGMEADOW, MASSACHUSETTS

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

**JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER**

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 609517

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Blueberry Hill Elementary School Improvements (Safe Routes To School) project in **Longmeadow, MA.**

WHEN: 6:00-7:00pm, Tuesday, December 7, 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Blueberry Hill Elementary School Improvements (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 proposed project consists of consolidating and improving existing pedestrian crosswalk locations with rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) and MUTCD-compliant warning signage. Curb ramps will be reconstructed to meet ADA/MAAB standards as needed. Sidewalks 6 feet in width are proposed to be constructed along the east side of Blueberry Hill Road between Bliss Road and the school entrance and along the south side of Bliss Road between Grassy Gutter Road and Blueberry Hill Road. An off-road bicycle path 6 feet in width is proposed along the east side of Blueberry Hill Road separate from the sidewalk. Bicyclists will share the vehicular travel lane along Bliss Road. A grass buffer between the sidewalk and the curb and drainage improvements will also be incorporated into the project in various locations.

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., Acting 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. 609517**. 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 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 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 Live Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be hosted on the internet at www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
ACTING 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.



Project No. 20154.01

Date: January 2021



PARE CORPORATION
 ENGINEERS - SCIENTISTS - PLANNERS
 8 BLACKSTONE VALLEY PLACE
 LINCOLN, RI 02865
 401-334-4100

Figure 1 Locus Map

Blueberry Hill Elementary School SRTS
 Longmeadow, Massachusetts

Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program Blueberry Hill Elementary School Improvements (Bliss Road / Blueberry Hill Road) Longmeadow, MA

PROJECT LOCATION

The project limits generally include approximately 0.10 miles of Blueberry Hill Road from Bliss Road to the school's southern driveway and approximately 0.20 miles of Bliss Road from Grassy Gutter Road to 400 feet east of Blueberry Hill Road. Additionally, minor modifications are proposed at the intersection of Bliss Road with Burbank Road and to reduce sign clutter along Bliss Road between Blueberry Hill Road and Bliss Court.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has identified Blueberry Hill Elementary School in Longmeadow, Massachusetts for inclusion in their Safe Routes to School Program. Blueberry Hill Elementary School is located at 275 Blueberry Hill Road. The scope of work under the Safe Routes to School Program generally includes improving and expanding the existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities to ensure safe access to the school. The project team will consider reallocation of the roadway right-of-way (ROW) to accommodate all users specified in the Healthy Transportation Policy Directive, E20-001, issued by MassDOT.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The project includes pedestrian and bicycle accommodation/safety improvements along segments of the two identified roadways. The proposed improvements are as follows:

- **Bliss Road** includes construction of a grass-buffered sidewalk. Under existing conditions there is a gap in the sidewalk network on the south side of Bliss Road between Grassy Gutter Road and Blueberry Hill Road. A 6-foot-wide concrete sidewalk is proposed in this area to complete the existing sidewalk network.
- **Blueberry Hill Road** includes the construction of a bituminous path. A 6-foot-wide bituminous path is proposed on the east side of Blueberry Hill Road adjacent to the existing 6-foot-wide concrete sidewalk, creating collectively accommodations for both pedestrians and bicyclists approaching the Blueberry Hill Elementary School. This bituminous path will also abut the Town's fields, providing an added benefit, and creating the beginnings of bicycle accommodations within the area.
- **Project Wide** small areas of mill and overlay are required to remove existing crosswalk markings that are not compliant with MassDOT and MUTCD standards; new/reconstructed curb ramps are included, as needed, to meet ADAAG requirements; a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) will be installed at the intersection of Bliss Road with Blueberry Hill Road to facilitate pedestrian and bicyclist crossings; and signing will be updated along Bliss Road to meet current standards and reduce sign clutter.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The proposed improvements do not include roadway modifications. Curb line changes will be limited to upgrading wheelchair ramps as necessary to ensure ADAAG compliance. The primary improvements, including the sidewalk and paved path installation, are separated from the roadway traffic by substantial grass buffers. Given these construction conditions, traffic management will be limited to intermittent shoulder closures for ramp reconstruction and RRFB installation.

RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

Based on the proposed design, there are very minimal impacts anticipated for the project. The terrain within the limits of work is fairly level, and the extent of regrading adjacent to the proposed sidewalk and paved path will be minimal. No impacts to private properties are required. The proposed improvements will require a temporary construction easement along the high school property to install the 600-foot stretch of sidewalk between Grassy Gutter Road and Blueberry Hill Road. Additionally, the 6-foot-wide paved path along the east side of the sidewalk on Blueberry Hill Road will be located on the Town fields' property, for a length of approximately 525 feet, by way of a permanent easement. These temporary and permanent ROW impacts on Town property will be secured by the Town of Longmeadow. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisition will be discussed further at this hearing.

PROJECT COST

The current estimate of the total construction cost of this project is approximately \$364,139 using a combination of Federal and State funding sources. The Town of Longmeadow is responsible for all costs associated with the acquisition of temporary and permanent easements, which are not expected to carry monetary amount.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The design plans presented this evening are at the 25% design stage. Design, permitting and right-of-way acquisition must be completed by Fall 2022. Construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2023.

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

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

RE: Virtual Public Hearing
BLUEBERRY HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS (SRTS)
TOWN OF LONGMEADOW
Project File No. 609517
Attn: Project Management

