



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

MARCH 28, 2022

FOR THE PROPOSED

**LOWELL – Reconstruction & Related work on VFW Highway
Project No. 605966
Project Management**

IN THE CITY OF LOWELL, 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. 605966

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed **reconstruction and related work on the VFW Highway project in Lowell, MA.**

WHEN: 6:30 pm, March 28, 2022

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed reconstruction and related work on VFW Highway 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 reconstruction & related work on VFW Highway. Shared use accommodations consisting of a wide outside travel lane with shared lane markings have been provided in accordance with applicable design guides.

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 6340, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: **Project Management, Project File No. 605966.** 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.

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. 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.
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

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.

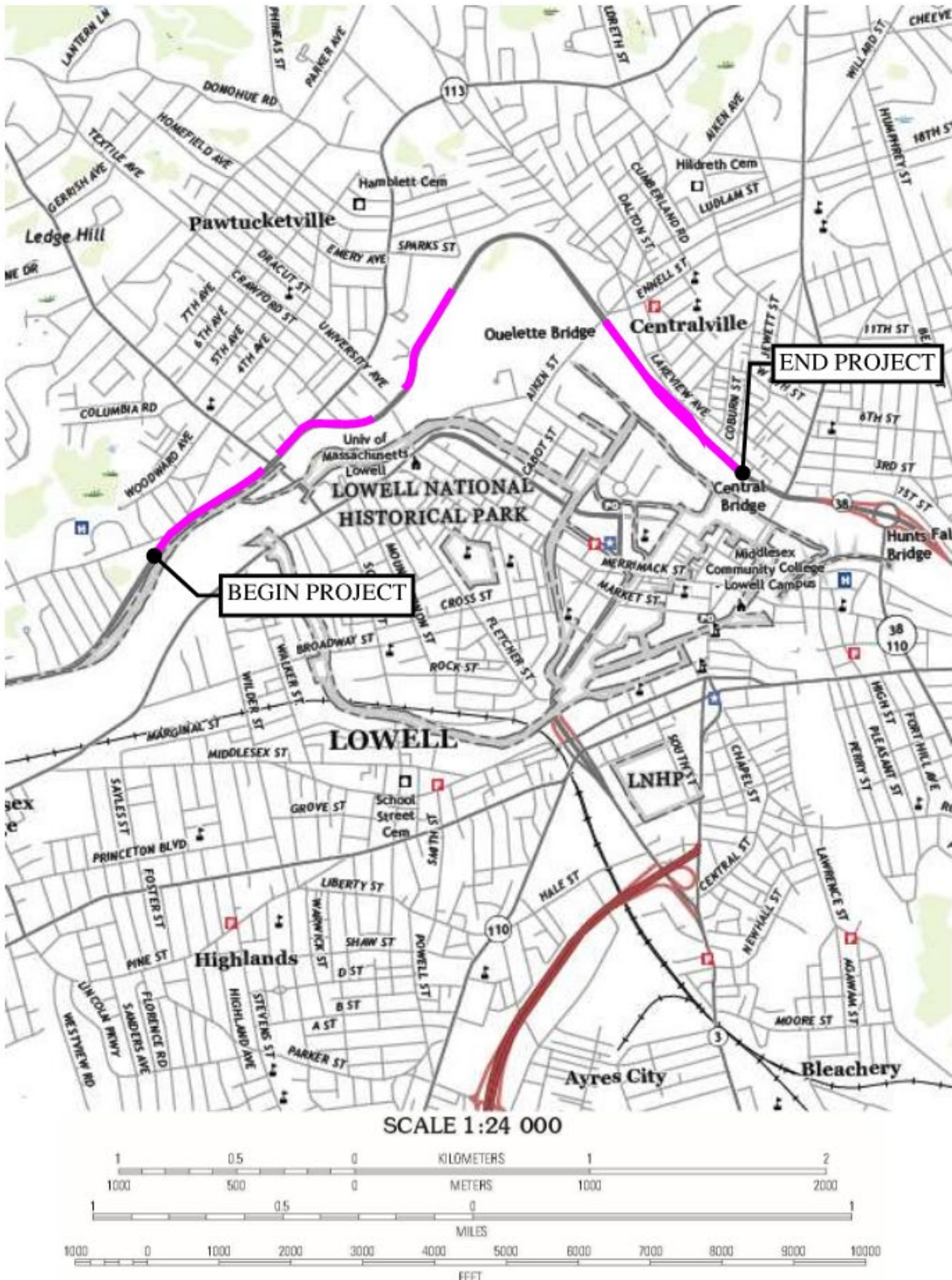
4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY HOUSE?

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.

Lowell, Massachusetts



Project Locus Map

Reconstruction and Related Work on VFW Highway Lowell, MA

PROJECT LOCATION

The project limits extend 1.54 miles (8,133.36 feet) along Route 113 and VFW Highway and generally includes three (3) separate segments adjacent to the Merrimack River. The project excludes areas within the limits of the Beaver Brook Bridge replacement project (602932) and University Ave Bridge project (601845). The limits of the project segments are described below.

Segment 1 begins on Pawtucket Boulevard (Route 113) at a point approximately 600 feet west of the intersection of Pawtucket Boulevard at Varnum Avenue and extends 2,334 feet (0.44 miles) on Varnum Avenue (Route 113) to the intersection of Varnum Avenue at Mammoth Road. Segment 1B begins at the intersection of Riverside Street (Route 113) at Mammoth Road and extends 1,485 feet (0.28 miles) along Riverside Street and VFW Highway to a point approximately 100 feet north of Plymouth Street. Segments 1 & 1B exclude the Mammoth Road – Varnum Avenue – Riverside Street intersection which is within the limits of MassDOT Project No. 607752.

Segment 2 begins at a point approximately 450 feet north of University Avenue and extends 1,420 feet (0.26 miles) on VFW Highway.

Segment 3 begins just south of the intersection of VFW Highway at Aiken Street and extends 2,895 feet (0.55 miles) on VFW Highway to a point approximately 350 feet west of the intersection of VFW Highway at Bridge Street.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Proposed work shall consist of full width resurfacing (micro-milling & hot mix asphalt (HMA) overlay) within the project limits outlined above. Additionally, from just west of Varnum Avenue to just west of Mammoth Road, the existing eastbound sidewalk will be replaced with an 8 to 10-foot Shared Use Path separated from VFW Highway by guardrail and a buffer zone. This work will require realignment and reconstruction of the existing medians to accommodate the revised eastbound curb line. This shared use path will connect the Falls Overlook project (607885) from north of Flagg Meadow Brook to a point 600 feet west of the School Street (O'Donnell) Bridge where the Falls Overlook Project will continue to the intersection.

Related work includes, but is not limited to, improvements to the pedestrian signals at Varnum Avenue, reconstructing pedestrian curb cut ramps; reconstructing driveway aprons; adding a wingwall to an existing headwall; reconstructing HMA sidewalks; guardrail upgrades and repair; tree trimming to improve sight lines; resetting existing curb and edging; applying recessed pavement markings; installing delineators; and installation of temporary erosion and sedimentation controls; traffic management; and incidental items to construction.

The project will also include modifications to the existing drainage system with the intent to divert stormwater from the existing Lowell sewer system to flow directly to the Merrimack River. This work will consist of constructing new catch basins, manholes, and drainage pipes, which will convey flows to both existing and proposed outfalls.

RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

Temporary and permanent construction easements will be required due to grading impacts to lawns, driveways, and walkways and to restore those associated impacts to adjacent properties. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisition will be discussed at this hearing.

PROJECT COST

The current estimate of the total construction cost of this project is approximately \$8,500,000.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The design plans presented this evening are at the 25% - 75% design stage. The project is currently programmed for the FY 2025 TIP. Design, permitting and right of way acquisition is anticipated to be complete in 2023.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Lowell, MA
Reconstruction & Related work on VFW Highway
Project File No. 605966

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: _____

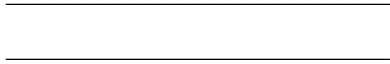
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Carrie E. Lavalley, P.E.
Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Virtual Public Hearing
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