

DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, October 30, 2023

6:30 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

Lake Cochituate Path Project

Construction of Shared-Use Path to Improve Overall Safety

Project No. 610680

Project Management

IN THE CITY OF NATICK, 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 DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 610680

A Design Public Hearing will be held by MassDOT in Natick to present an overview of the proposed Lake Cochituate Path Project in Natick.

WHERE: Natick Town Hall
Dlott Meeting Room, Second Floor
13 E Central Street
Natick, MA, 01760

WHEN: Monday, October 30th, 2023, 6:30 pm EST

PURPOSE: The purpose of the hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Lake Cochituate Path Project in Natick and receive public comment. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: This Project will include constructing an approximate 0.4-mile segment of shared-use path along Route 9, from Archer Drive to the Cochituate Rail Trail. MassDOT invites you to attend the Design Public Hearing to learn more about the need for the Project, work to be performed, schedule, potential impacts to the public (including vehicular and pedestrian/bicyclists), and next steps.

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 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No.610680. 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.

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 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.
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. 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 State 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?

The State may seek donations, of parcels, where permanent rights are required. This procedure will minimize the acquisition cost.

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. The State 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 STATE 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.



Lake Cochituate Path Project

PROJECT LOCATION

The Project area in Natick, MA, starts at Speen St. and continues east along Route 9/Worcester St., across Lake Cochituate, to a connection with the Cochituate Rail Trail. The project also includes or abuts the following locations:

- Speen Street
- Hartford Street
- Cochituate Rail Trail
- Archer Drive
- Route 9/Worcester St.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of Lake Cochituate Path is to provide a direct and safe connection for bicycle and pedestrian access to the Cochituate Rail Trail from Hartford Street and Speen Street.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The intent of the project is to construct a 0.4-mile segment of a shared-use path along Route 9, from Archer Drive to Cochituate Rail Trail. Existing privacy fences impacted will be replaced, and general security and lighting will be evaluated with final design.

MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC DURING CONSTRUCTION

All roadways within the project will remain open to traffic throughout construction. Parking within the project area will be maintained to the maximum extent possible. Occasional short traffic disruptions may occur but every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience to the public. Pedestrian and vehicular access to abutting properties will be maintained at all times, except for brief periods of time during which abutters will be notified in advance.

RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

The proposed construction requires a secure right-of-way. 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. The current design plan indicates that fee takings and permanent easements may/will be required. Other areas will require temporary construction easements. Affected property owners' rights are protected under our Massachusetts General Laws, primarily Chapter 79. If a project is receiving federal funds, the property owners' rights are further defined under Title III of the Real Property Acts of 1970, as amended.

PROJECT COST

The preliminary construction cost of this project at this design stage is approximately \$4 million.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The design plans presented this evening represent the 25% design. The project has been programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan for Federal Fiscal Year 2025.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

NATICK, MA
Lake Cochituate Path Project
Project File No. 610680

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.

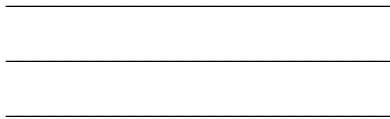
PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

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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: Design Public Hearing
Lake Cochituate Path Project
NATICK
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