



**VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**MARCH 14, 2024**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**NATICK SPRING STREET BRIDGE REPLACEMENT  
Project No. 610869**

**Project Management**

**IN THE TOWN 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 PUBLIC HEARING  
Project File No. 610869

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Spring Street Bridge Replacement project in Natick, MA.

WHEN: 6:30PM, Thursday, March 14, 2024

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed design for the Spring Street Bridge Replacement project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The project consists of a full replacement of the Spring Street Bridge over the MBTA Framingham/Worcester rail line in Natick, MA. MassDOT plans to replace the current existing superstructure, which dates to 1900, with a prefabricated pedestrian-bike bridge. Nonetheless, the agency remains committed to providing the Town of Natick with a pedestrian-bike bridge which will replace the structurally deficient bridge, improve pedestrian and bike accommodations, and increase the clearance over the MBTA tracks. The proposed pedestrian-bike bridge consists of a shared use path, sidewalk, and a wheel-chair accessible ramp. In addition, the proposed design includes sidewalk reconstruction and Town of Natick permitted parking spots. The gas main will remain unaffected and be present on the new prefabricated bridge. Due to the bridge closure, cyclists and pedestrians will be provided with detour options during construction.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Town of Natick, 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. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to [MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us) or via US Mail to 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 610869. 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 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. 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.

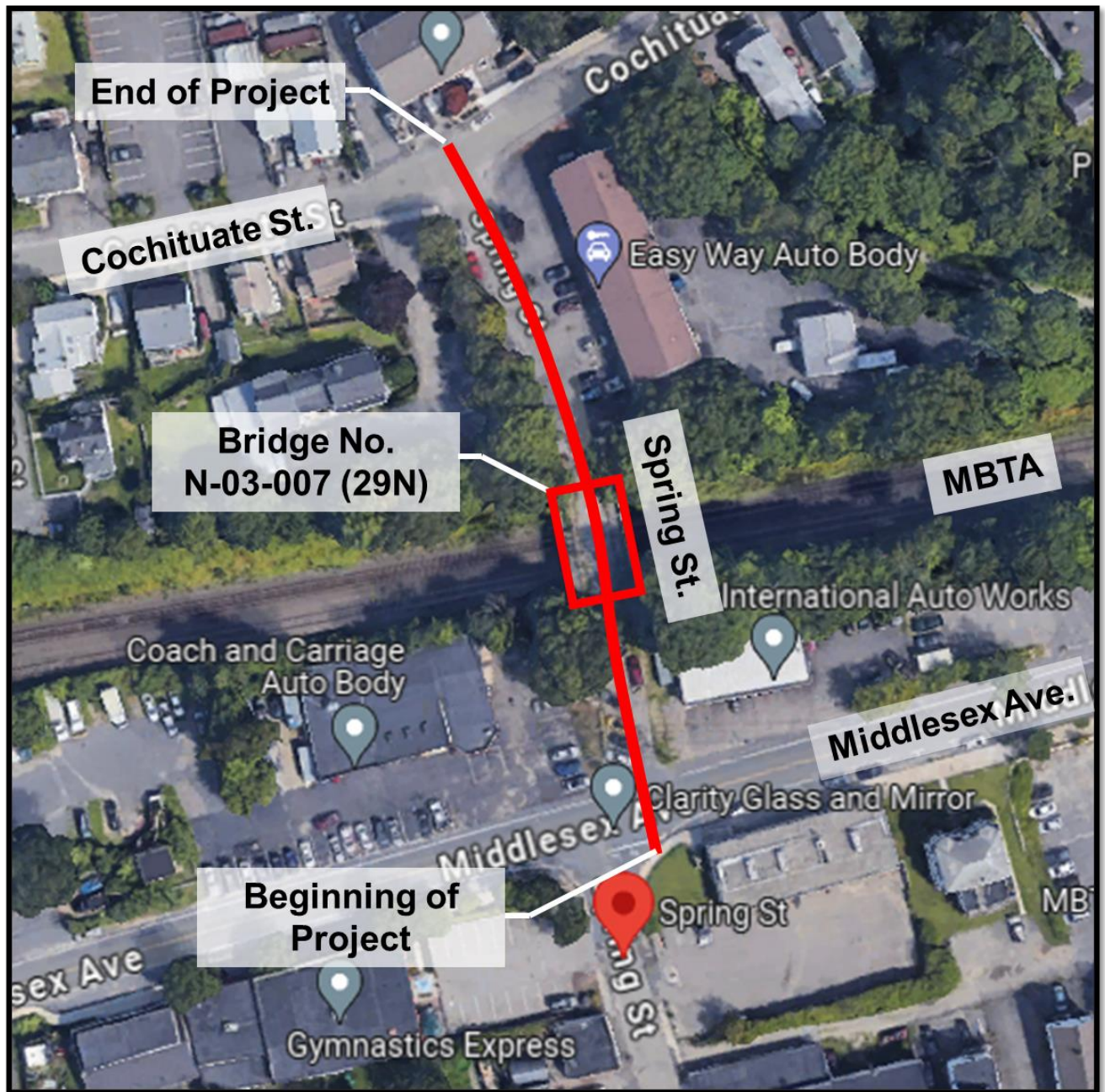
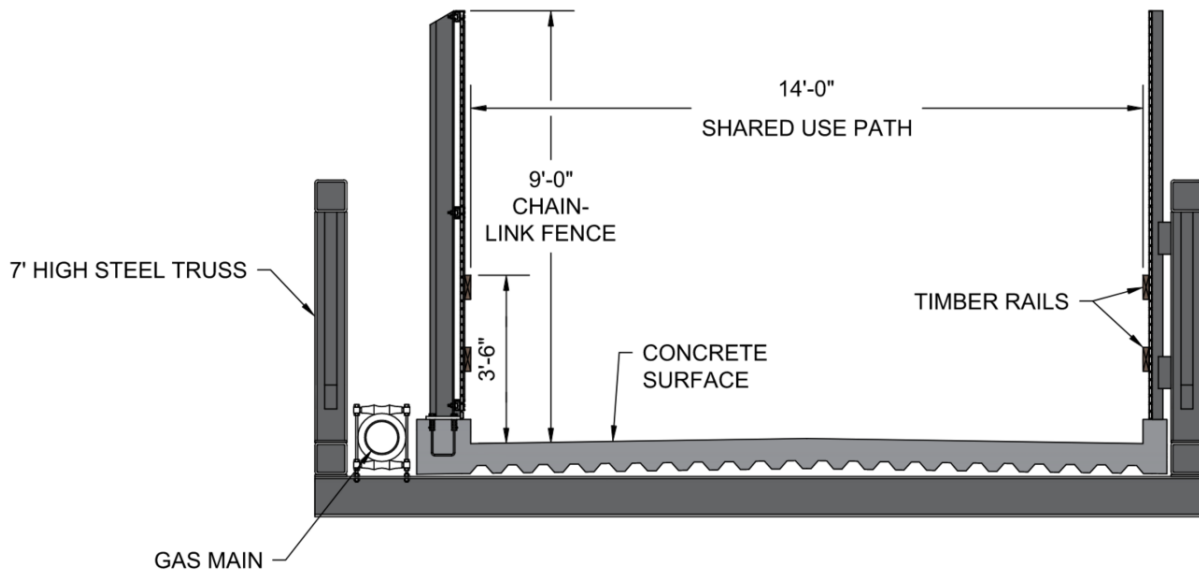
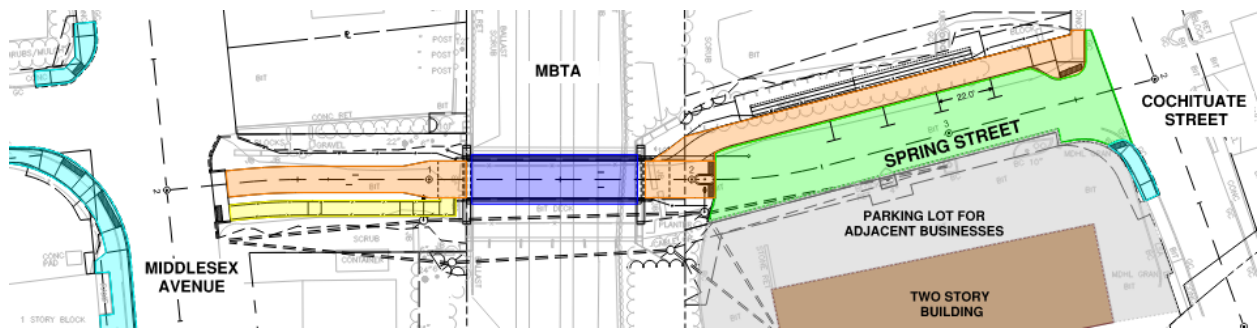


Figure 1: Locus Map

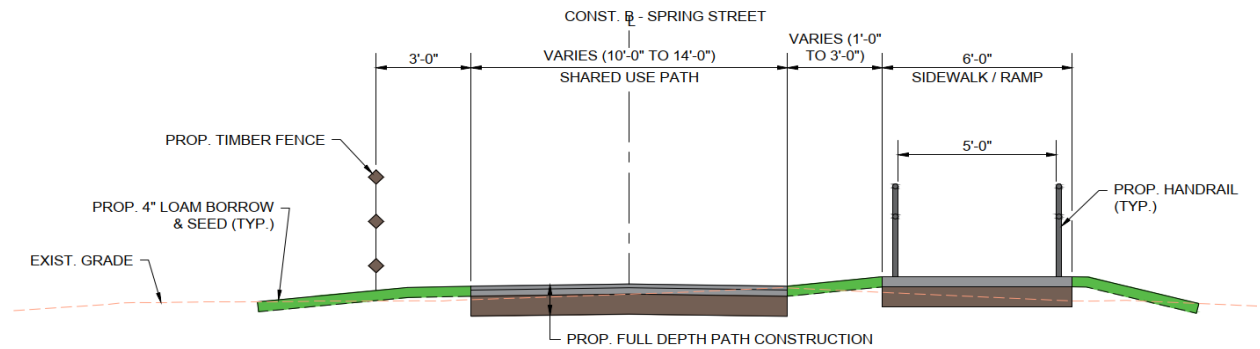


**Figure 2: Proposed cross section of the pedestrian-bicycle bridge**

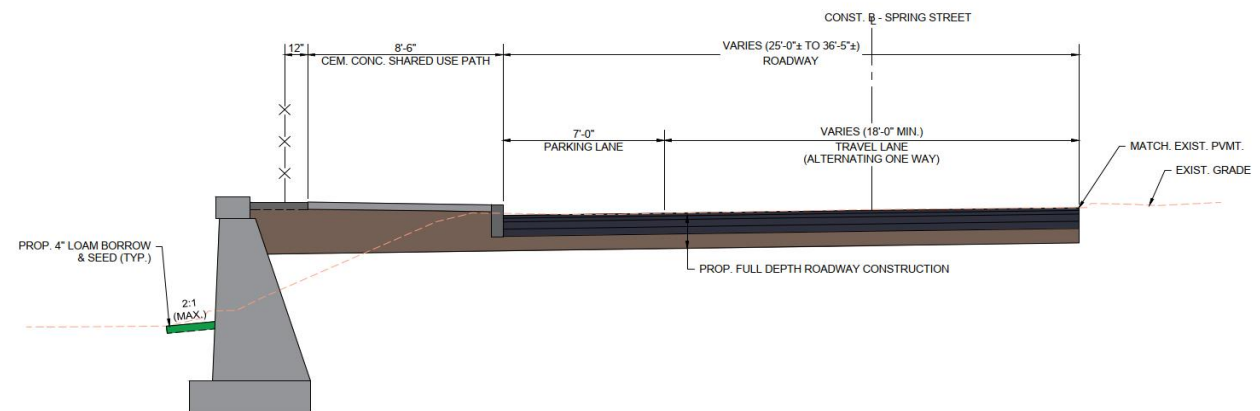




**Figure 3: Overview of key project components**



**Figure 4: Approach from Middlesex Avenue Cross-Section**



**Figure 5: Approach from Cochituate Street Cross-Section**



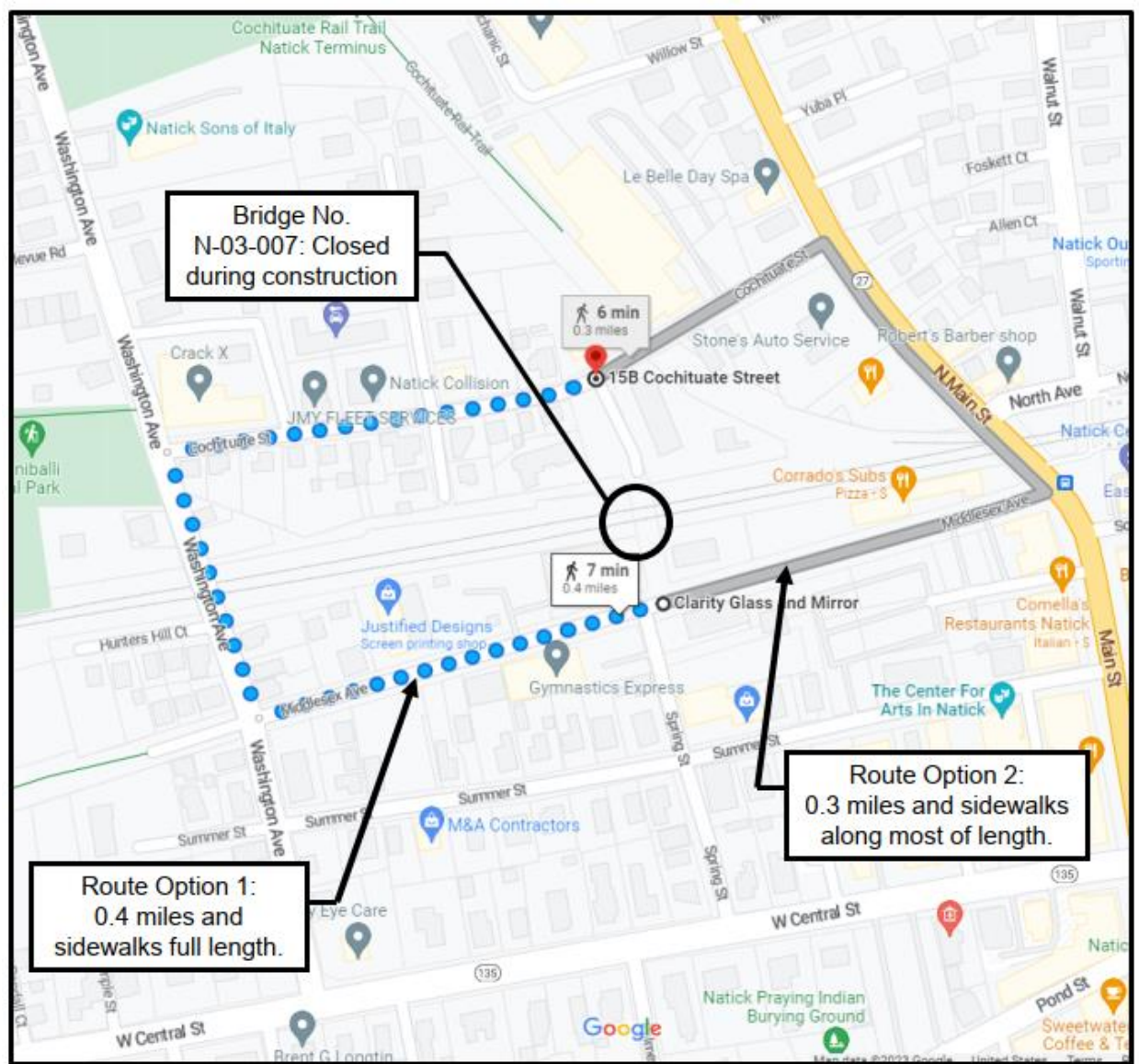


Figure 6: Cycling/pedestrian connections during bridge construction

**Project Location:**

The existing bridge carried Spring Street, between Middlesex Avenue and Cochituate Street over the MBTA Framingham/Worcester Commuter Rail Line in Natick until 1998. In 1998, the structure was closed to vehicular traffic due to severe structural deterioration of its wood and steel deck. Since then, the bridge has continued to provide limited cycling and walking accommodations. The existing structure also supports a gas line. Since the existing bridge's closure to vehicle traffic, the disconnected approaches of Spring Street from the adjoining roadways have become de facto parking areas for nearby businesses.

**Project Purpose:**

The existing Spring Street Bridge was built in 1900. The bridge's steel girders, and wooden deck are severely deteriorated. The height of the structure above the MBTA Framingham/Worcester Line is substandard at 17 feet, 1 inch. The proposed bridge will replace the span over the railroad with a prefabricated steel structure resting on the existing bridge's granite block abutments which remain in good condition. The portion of Spring Street between Middlesex Avenue and the bridge will be converted to a shared use path and an accessible path separated by a grass median. The accessible path is required to allow the users of mobility aids to traverse the slope between Middlesex Avenue and the bridge. The portion of Spring Street between Cochituate Street and the bridge will continue to provide parking and vehicular access to adjoining businesses. Bicycle and pedestrian traffic along this section of Spring Street will be accommodated on a shared use path.

**Existing Conditions**

The existing bridge is structurally deficient and closed to vehicular traffic. Bicycle and pedestrian access is limited due to the deteriorated condition of the existing deck.

**Maintenance of Traffic During Replacement**

During construction, the bridge will be closed to all pedestrians and cyclists. While this occurs, there are two detour options. Option one directs pedestrians and cyclists east using North Main Street (0.4 miles and sidewalks along the full length). Option two directs pedestrians and cyclists west using Washington Street (0.3 miles and sidewalks along most of the length). To minimize disruptions to MBTA operations, work on or over the rail tracks will take place on nights or weekends.

**Project Schedule**

The project plans on display are at the 25% preliminary design stage. Comments from the public hearing will be incorporated into the final design plans to the maximum extent possible. It is anticipated that the final design plans will be completed, and the project advertised for construction bids in fall 2024 with construction beginning in 2025. It is currently anticipated that the new bridge would open for cyclists and pedestrians in fall 2026.

**Project Cost**

The project's total anticipated cost is approximately \$2.38 million. Funding for construction will be by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Boston, MA  
River Street Bridge Replacement Project  
Project File No. 610869

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, Project File No. 610869

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

RE: Virtual Public Hearing  
Spring Street Bridge Replacement Project  
**NATICK**  
Project File No. 610869  
Attn: Project Management

