



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

MAY 3, 2023

FOR THE PROPOSED

**River Street Bridge Replacement
Project No. 606901**

Project Management

IN THE CITY OF BOSTON, 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. 606901

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

WHEN: 6:00PM, Wednesday, May 3, 2023

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed River 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 full replacement of the River Street Bridge over the Amtrak/MBTA Northeast Corridor rail line in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Boston. MassDOT is currently repairing the existing bridge which dates to 1883 to lessen community impacts while design for the replacement bridge is completed. Nonetheless, the agency remains committed to providing the Hyde Park community with a new River Street Bridge which will be easier to maintain and have fewer community impacts related to ongoing repair work. The proposed bridge consists of a single lane in each direction, a sidewalk in each direction, and bicycle accommodations consisting of a usable shoulder. The utilities currently on the bridge will be relocated to a permanent utility bridge immediately south of the existing structure. It is proposed that during construction, cyclists and pedestrians will be provided with a path across the railroad using a temporary walkway placed on top of the utility bridge.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The City of Boston, 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 or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 606901. 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). 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 E. Lavallee, 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.

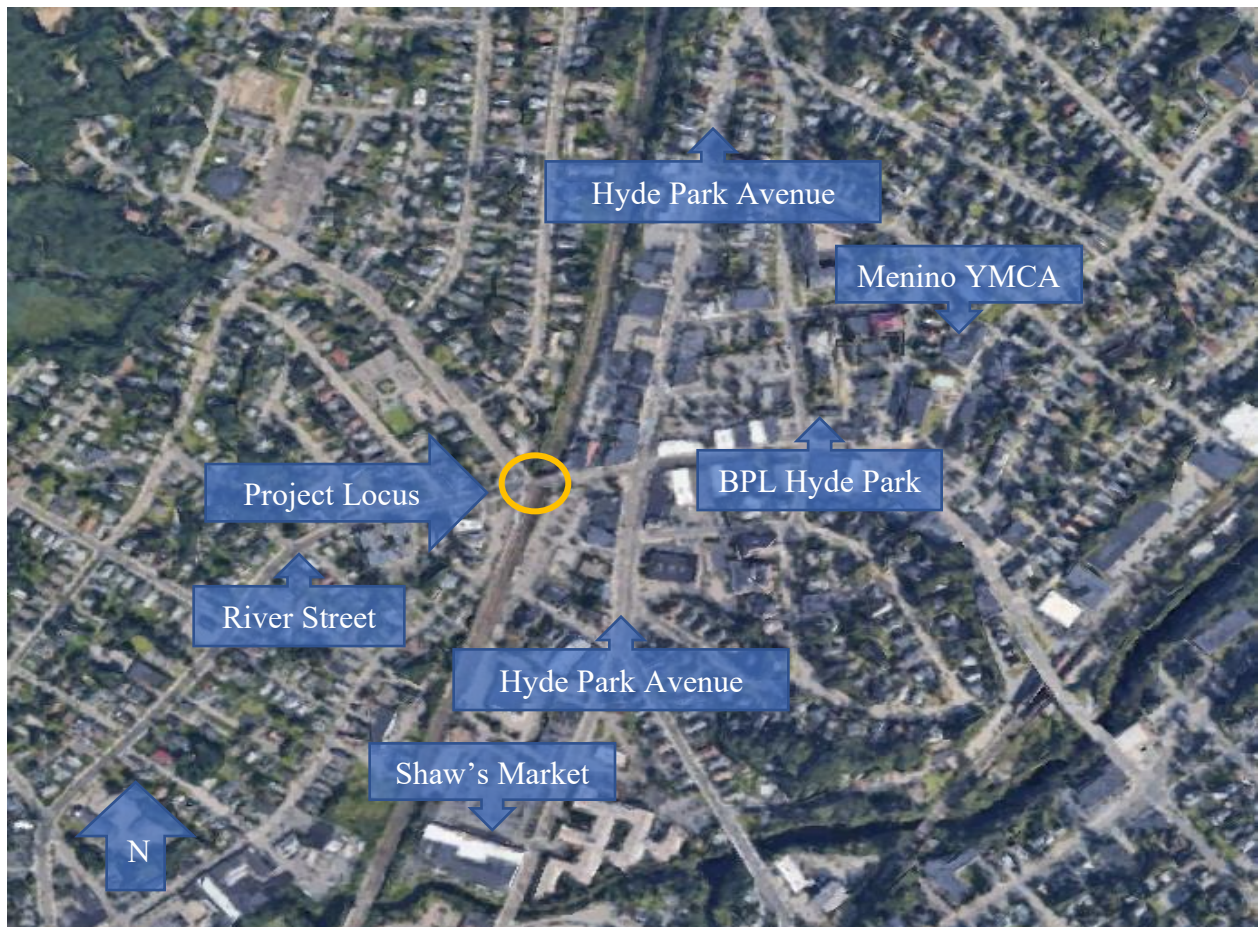


Figure 1: Locus Map

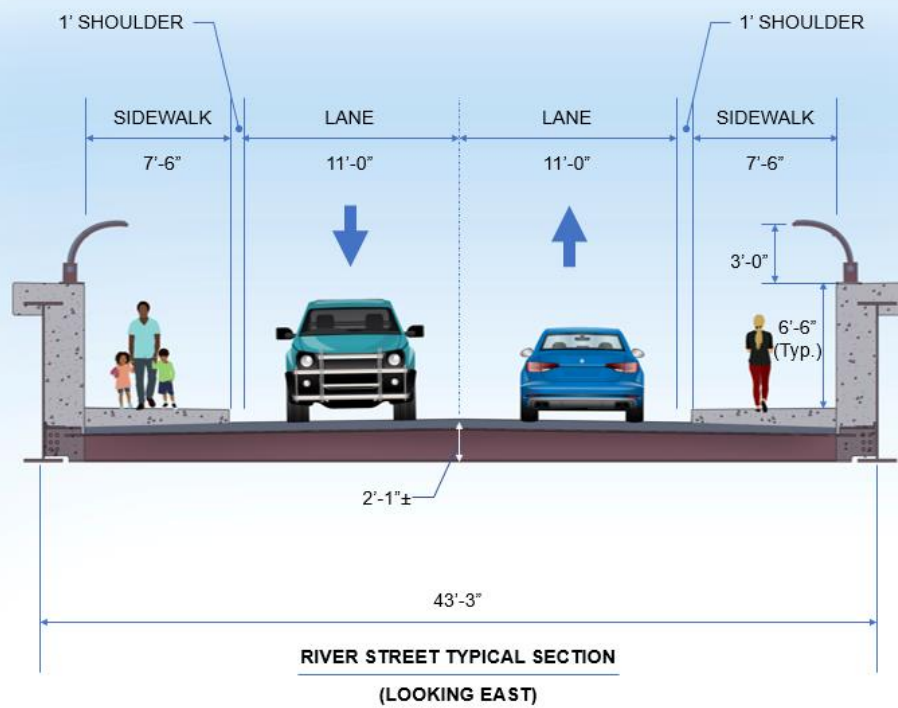


Figure 2: Proposed cross section of the replacement bridge

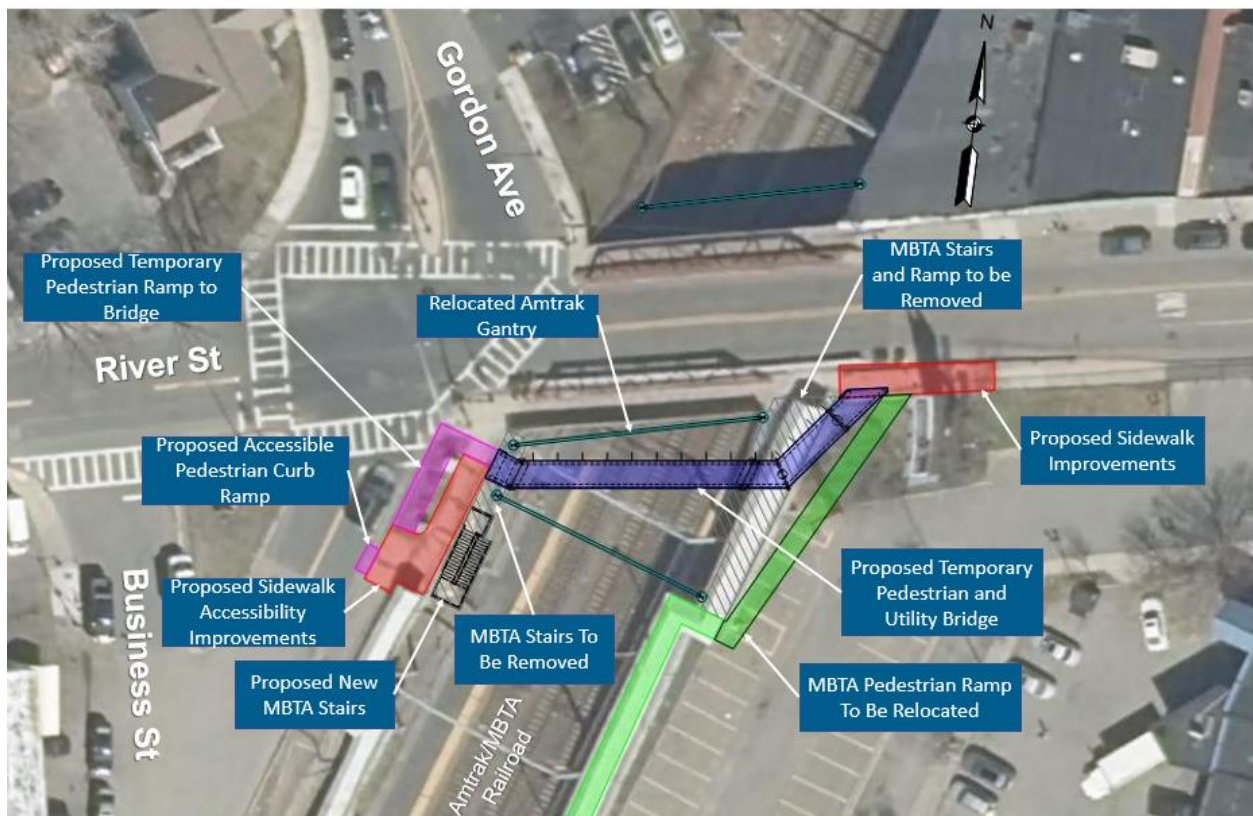
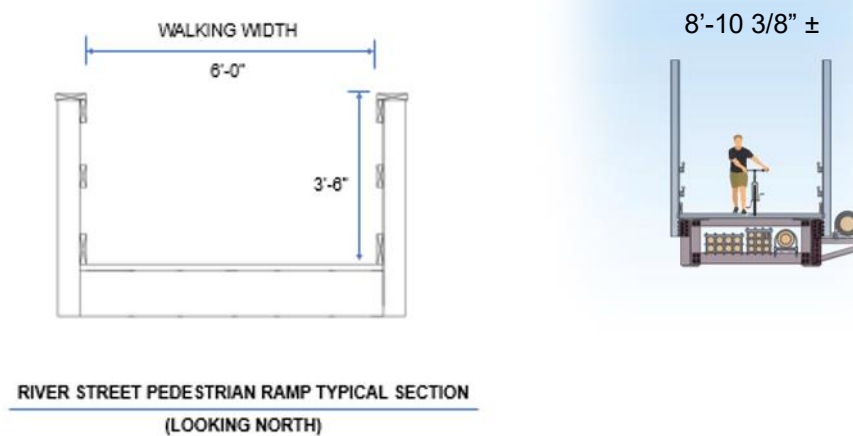


Figure 3: Proposed permanent utility bridge/construction period bicycle/pedestrian bridge

Figure 4: Proposed cross-sections of the permanent utility bridge/construction period bicycle/pedestrian bridge



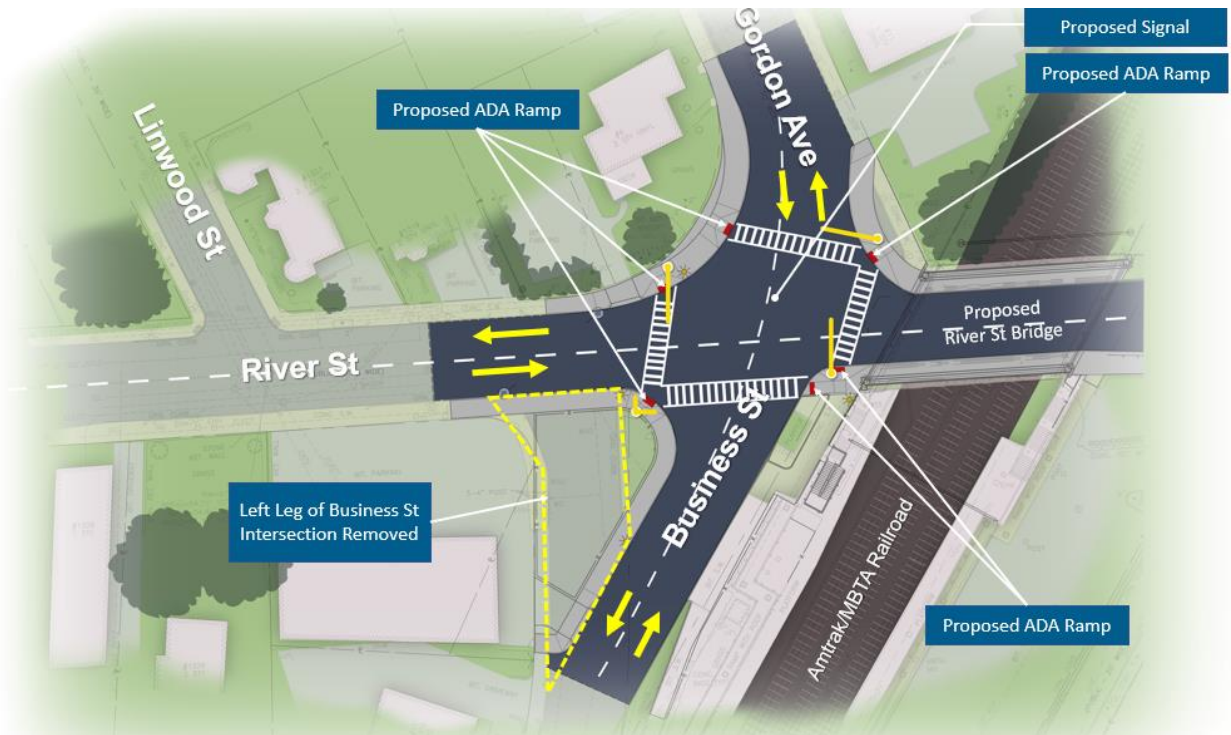


Figure 5: Proposed improvements to the West Street/Business Street/Gordon Avenue intersection

Project Location:

The project location includes the River Street Bridge located on River Street, immediately to the west (towards Dedham) of Hyde Park Avenue in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Boston. The bridge carries River Street over the Amtrak/MBTA Northeast Corridor rail line. Prior to its closure to ensure public safety, the bridge carried local traffic, MBTA and school buses, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. The bridge also carries electric, gas, water, and telephone utility lines. Electric power wires (catenary) for Amtrak's high-speed trains are directly connected to the underside of the existing structure.

Project Purpose:

The existing River Street Bridge, which dates to 1883, will be replaced in its current position. Utilities and catenary will be relocated off the existing bridge to permanent support structures of their own. Utility and catenary relocations will make inspection and maintenance of the replacement bridge easier for MassDOT while reducing the impact of future inspections and repairs on the Hyde Park community.

Existing Conditions

MassDOT is currently repairing the existing bridge, with the goal of reopening it to traffic by spring of 2024 allowing design work to advance without the community impacts associated with the detours.

Maintenance of Traffic During Replacement

Reopening the existing bridge will allow important preparatory work such as utility and catenary relocation to take place with the current bridge open. To facilitate this work, lane closures will be needed at times, but they will only impact one direction at a time, and only during working hours. Once that work is complete, today's bridge will need to be shut down for demolition and replacement. While this occurs, today's detours will need to be put back in place. Due to the type of structure the existing bridge is, a truss, it cannot be kept partially open for one way traffic or emergency access while its replacement is built. The need to provide adequate clearance over Amtrak's catenary means a bridge prefabricated off-site and moved into place with a crane is not applicable at this location. While the old bridge is demolished and the replacement built, cyclists and pedestrians will be accommodated by a temporary bridge deck built on the utility bridge. It is anticipated that cyclists will be asked to dismount and walk over the temporary structure to ensure the safety of all users.

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 spring 2024 with construction beginning in 2025.

Project Cost

The project's total anticipated cost is approximately \$12.5 million. Funding for construction will be by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Federal Highway Administration.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Boston, MA
River Street Bridge Replacement Project
Project File No. 606901

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. You may e-mail comments directly to hydeparkriverstbridge@dot.state.ma.us or you may mail this sheet with any additional comments to:

Carrie E. Lavallee, 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: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

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

RE: Virtual Public Hearing
River Street Bridge Replacement Project
BOSTON (HYDE PARK)
Project File No. 606901
Attn: Project Management

