



LIVE VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021 @ 6:00 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

**DOWNTOWN SOUTHBRIDGE _ Roadway and Safety Improvements
Project No. 608778
Highway Design**

IN THE TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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

**JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING MEETING
Project File No. 608778

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be published on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed **Intersection Improvement at Central, Foster, Hook and Hamilton Streets** project in **Downtown Southbridge, MA**

WHEN: Thursday, April 1, 2021 @ 6:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Intersection Improvement at Central, Foster, Hook and Hamilton 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 includes approximately 1500 feet of roadway/safety improvement beginning at approximately the Starlite Art Gallery on Hamilton Street and extends to Off Hamilton Street; follows Hook Street to intersection with Central Street; and extends to Foster Street. The project limit is Cormier Jewelry on Central Street and the intersection with Wardell Court on Foster Street. Project includes Laroche Way. The project improvements include a mini roundabout at the intersection of Hamilton Street and Laroche Way, a new signalized intersection at Laroche Way and Hook Street, and closure of an unsignalized intersection at Hamilton Street, Hook Street and Laroche Way (identified as a high crash location). Also, the project will include additional turn lanes at Laroche Way and Central Street; bicycle lanes (in both directions) on Central Street and new sidewalks (on both sides of the roadway) throughout the project limits.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Town of Southbridge is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT 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 Patricia A. Leavenworth, 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. **608778**. 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 posted to 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 Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, 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,

Patricia A Leavenworth, 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

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.

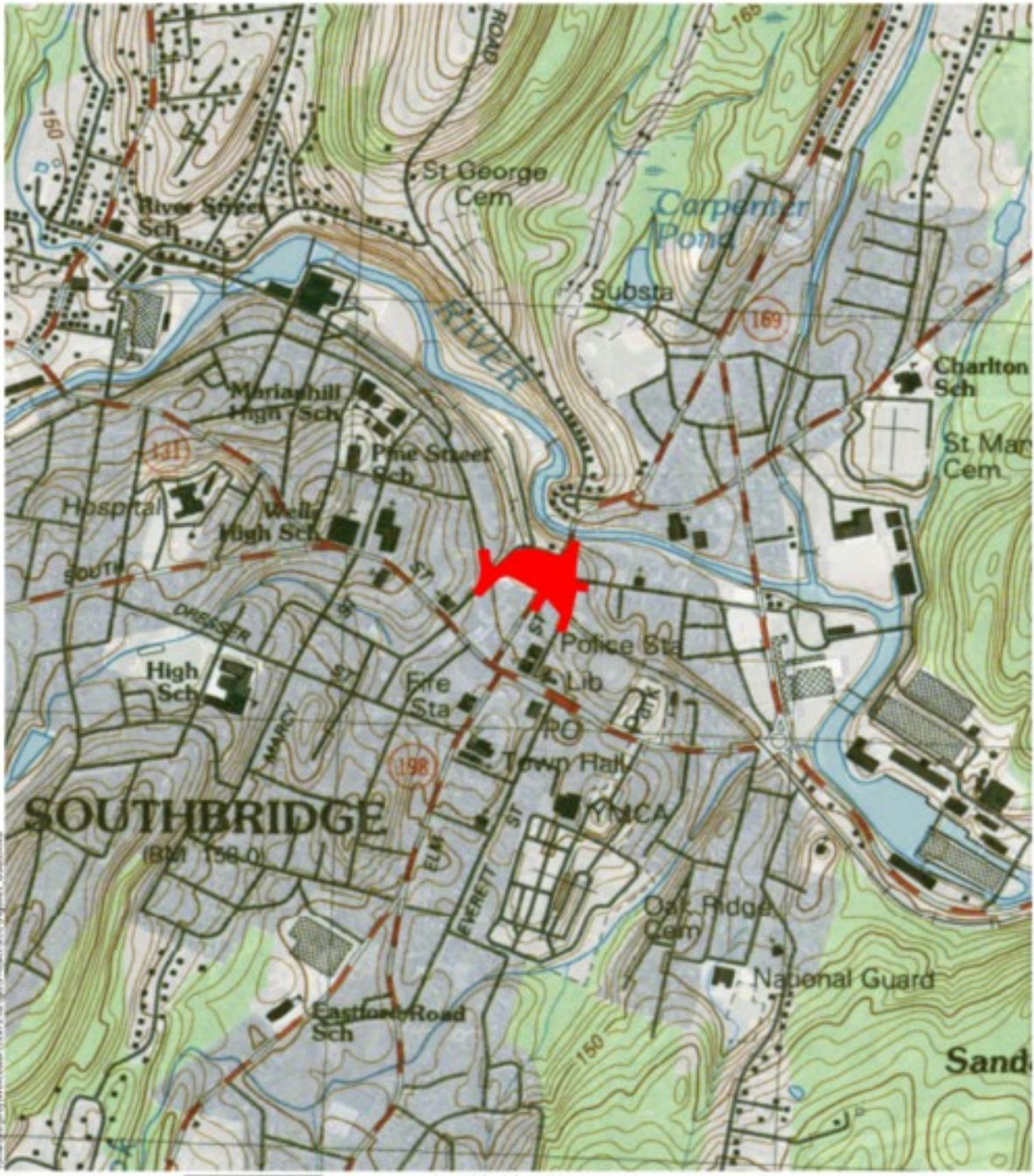
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection, 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.



\\msk\p\proj\w\locat\13472_00\fig\Project\FIC\Figure1_1965.mxd



Southbridge Downtown Intersection Improvements

Southbridge, Massachusetts

Legend
 Project Location

Figure 1 - USGS Locus

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT LOCATION AND LIMITS

The proposed project includes approximately 1500 feet of roadway/safety improvement beginning at approximately the Starlite Art Gallery on Hamilton Street and extends to Off Hamilton Street; follows Hook Street to intersection with Central Street; and extends to Foster Street. The project limit is Cormier Jewelry on Central Street and the intersection with Wardell Court on Foster Street. Project includes Larochelle Way.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The intersection of Central Street at Hook and Foster Streets has been identified as a High Crash Location by MassDOT. The proposed plan eliminates the intersection at Central Street and Hook and Foster Streets. Traffic will be redirected from Hook Street via LaRoche Way and Foster Street with a new traffic signal at Central Street.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Area is classified as dense urban area. Pavement conditions are in good to fair condition. There are no existing traffic signals and signage and pavement markings are old and deteriorating. Street lighting consists of lights on wood poles. Sidewalks are located within the project limits but, not on both sides of the roadway. Many of the wheelchair ramps are not ADA compliant. No bicycle accommodations. Crosswalks are not present in many areas that warrant crosswalks. The current geometry of the roadway, intersections and driveways do not allow of safe vehicular or pedestrian travel.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The project improvements include a mini-roundabout at the intersection of Hamilton Street and Larochelle Way, a new signalized intersection at Larochelle Way and Hook Street, and closure of an unsignalized intersection at Hamilton Street, Hook Street and Larochelle Way. Also, the project will include additional turn lanes on Larochelle Way at Central Street; bicycle lanes, in both directions, on Central Street; and new sidewalks, on both sides of the roadway, throughout project limits.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Lane shifts and closures, road closures and detours will be required during working hours. Access for property and business owners will be maintained.

UTILITIES

There is a culvert at Nuisance Brook that flows through the project area. It is not expected that this culvert will be affected. A new water distribution and closed drainage system are proposed within the project limits.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS (CONT.)

RIGHT-OF-WAY

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Temporary and permanent easements will be required for the construction of this project.

PROJECT COST

The estimated cost of construction for this project is estimated to be \$4.9 million dollars. This project is funded under the Federal Aid Program whereby 80% of the construction cost will be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and 20% of the construction cost will be funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PROJECT STATUS

The design plans displayed at this live Virtual Design Public Hearing are at the 25% design stage. Comments made at this hearing will be incorporated to the maximum extent feasible. The project is expected to be advertised for construction in the Spring 2024 subject to obtaining all environmental permits. The construction is expected to start in Summer 2024.