



**VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**MARCH 3, 2021**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**IMPROVEMENTS ON ST. JAMES AVENUE AT ST. JAMES BOULEVARD AND  
CAREW STREET  
Project File No. 608565**

**IN THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, 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**  
**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION**  
**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Project File No. 608565**

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be published on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the **proposed Improvements on St. James Avenue at St. James Boulevard & Carew Street in Springfield, MA.**

WHEN:            Wednesday, March 3, 2021

PURPOSE:       The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Improvements on St. James Avenue at St. James Boulevard & Carew Street 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 and improvements to segments of St. James Avenue, St. James Boulevard and Carew Street in East Springfield. The primary purpose of the project is to improve safety. The intersections of St. James Avenue at Carew Street and at St. James Boulevard are high crash locations that have been HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) eligible since 2011. Bicycle and pedestrian users are accommodated by shared-use paths which have been provided on both sides of the roadway in accordance with applicable design guides. Traffic signal equipment will be upgraded to improve safety at both intersections.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The City of Springfield is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Roadway Project Management Project File No. 608565. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing is posted to the MassDOT website listed below. Project inquiries may be emailed to [dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us](mailto:dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us)

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 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](http://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?**

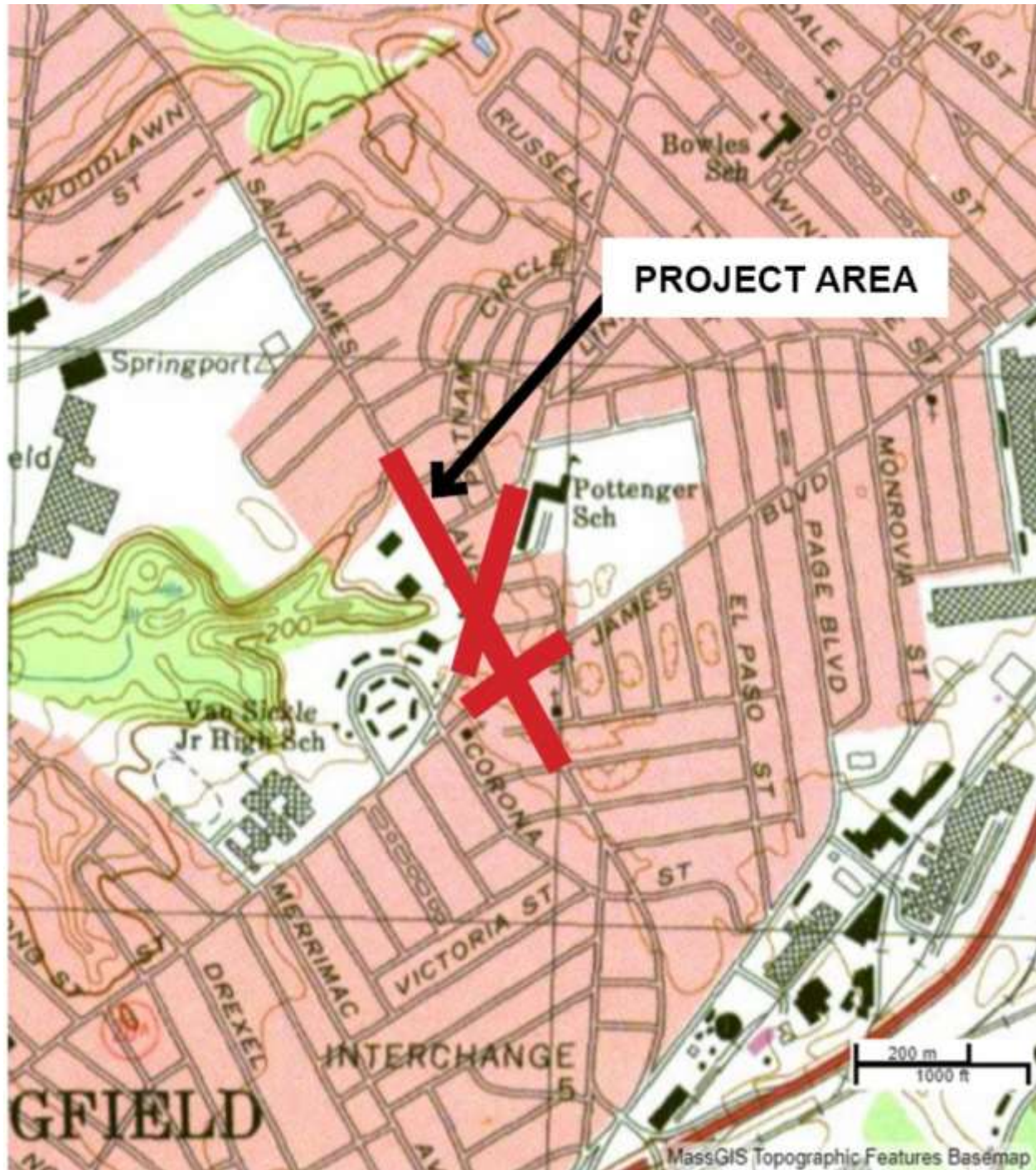
In the event that donations are not considered, or completed, every effort will be made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded. Municipal and/or outside appraisers will complete an appraisal. Consideration is given to the type of rights needed, whether in fee, permanent or temporary easements. 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.

## Improvements on St. James Ave. at St. James Blvd. and Carew Street

Springfield, Massachusetts



**IMPROVEMENTS ON ST. JAMES AVENUE AT ST. JAMES BOULEVARD AND  
CAREW STREET  
Project File No. 608565**

**PROJECT LOCATION AND LIMITS**

The project limits include approximately 2,000 linear feet along St. James Avenue and segments of intersecting Carew Street (approximately 1,300 LF) and St. James Boulevard (approximately 750 LF). The project area is primarily an auto-oriented retail commercial node surrounded by residential neighborhoods that have been identified as Environmental Justice communities. There is an elementary school within the project area on Carew Street and there is a fire station, middle school and magnet grade 6-12 school just outside of the project area on Carew Street.

**PROJECT PURPOSE**

The primary purpose of the project is to improve safety. The intersections of St. James Avenue at Carew Street and St. James Boulevard are high crash locations that have been HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) eligible since 2011. The St. James Avenue / Carew Street intersection is ranked 93rd and the St. James Avenue / St. James Boulevard intersection is ranked 5th on the top 200 crash locations in Massachusetts for the period 2014-2016 (the most recent period for which data has been compiled). A Road Safety Audit was conducted in 2017 and found many contributing factors to the high number of crashes including a lack of lane use markings and signage, poor signal visibility, poor signal timing, a proliferation of driveway curbcuts to commercial businesses along St. James Avenue, close intersection spacing between St. James Boulevard and Carew Street and skewed intersection geometry at Carew Street. There is also a lack of pedestrian signals and crossings do not meet ADA requirements. All of the streets in the project area rank high for their potential for everyday biking, however there is a lack of bicycle accommodations in the project area. In addition to safety concerns, the St. James Avenue project area experiences queueing and congestion in the peak commuting hours.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

St. James Avenue is an urban minor arterial roadway that is aligned in an overall north-south direction. The roadway is under the jurisdiction of the City of Springfield. St. James Avenue provides connection between Broadway Street in the City of Chicopee to the northwest and State Street in the City of Springfield to the southeast. St. James Avenue generally consists of one general purpose lane in each direction with ‘defacto’ turn lanes at major intersections. The street is typically 44-feet wide (curb to curb), providing one 22-foot wide travel lane in each direction. Directional flow is separated by a striped double-yellow center line. The condition of the pavement is fair with moderate cracking and a few patches. St. James Avenue has a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour (MPH) in both directions within the study area and is regulated by the City of Springfield. Sidewalks are provided along both sides of St. James Avenue through the project area. On-street parking is only allowed on the southernmost block of the study area between Merida Street and Oklahoma Street/St. Luke’s Episcopal Church.



Land uses along St. James Avenue include a mixture of residential and auto-oriented retail businesses with off-street parking areas. Commercial businesses front on St. James Avenue and occupy the majority of the roadway frontage through the project area. Correspondingly there are 25 driveway curb cuts providing access to 14 properties along St. James Avenue between Oklahoma and Ames Streets. Driveways typically accommodate two-way traffic and most parcels have two driveways connecting to St. James Avenue. The Big Y Plaza located on the northwesterly corner of St. James Avenue and Carew Street has five driveways on St. James Avenue.

Carew Street is an urban minor arterial roadway that is aligned in an overall east-west direction. The roadway is under the jurisdiction of the City of Springfield. Carew Street provides connection between Main Street to the west and East Main Street (Route 141) in the City of Springfield. Carew Street generally consists of one general purpose lane and is generally 30-feet wide (curb to curb), providing one 13-foot wide travel lane and a 2-foot shoulder in each direction. Directional flow on Carew Street is separated by solid double-yellow center lines. The condition of the pavement is fair with moderate cracking. The speed limit on Carew Street is 30 miles per hour (MPH) in both directions within the study area and is regulated by the City of Springfield. Sidewalks are provided along both sides of the street.

Land uses along Carew Street are predominantly commercial/retail in the study area. The Mary O. Pottenger Elementary School is located on Carew Street opposite Hobart Street at the northerly end of the study area. There are nine driveways providing access to seven commercial properties along Carew Street. The driveways allow two-way traffic. On street parking is prohibited on both sides of the street between St. James Avenue and the elementary school. The frontage of the elementary school is used for school bus and parent drop-off and pick-up during school hours. The existing street and sidewalk design does not accommodate this activity well – there is not a designated pull-off area and the grass buffer along the sidewalk is not accessible or suited for heavy pedestrian traffic.

St. James Boulevard (Route 20A) is an urban minor arterial roadway that is aligned in an overall east-west direction. The roadway is under the jurisdiction of the City of Springfield. St. James Boulevard provides connection between Carew Street to the west and Page Boulevard in the City of Springfield. St. James Boulevard generally consists of one general purpose lane in each direction with turn lanes at major intersections and is generally 50-feet wide, providing one 24-foot wide travel lane and a 1-foot shoulder in each direction. While the roadway is striped for one lane, the roadway is wide enough for two lanes in each direction and operates as such. Directional flow on St. James Boulevard is separated by solid double-yellow center lines. The condition of the pavement is fair with moderate cracking. Speed on St. James Boulevard is regulated by the City of Springfield and is set at 30 miles per hour (MPH) in the eastbound direction and 35 miles per hour (MPH) in the westbound direction, however the posted speed is 30 miles per hour (MPH) in the westbound direction at Fordham Street, which poses a conflict between the regulations and the posted speed limit at this location. Sidewalks are provided along both sides of St. James Boulevard. Land uses along St. James Boulevard within the study area consist of commercial retail uses with off-street parking areas. There are six driveways providing access to five commercial properties. All of the driveways allow two-way travel. On street parking is prohibited on both sides of the street in the study area.



## **ROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

The proposed 25% design consists of a combination of micromilling with HMA overlay and full-depth construction along St. James Avenue to provide a consistent two-lane roadway with turning lanes at the intersections. The proposed design will narrow the roadway approximately 4-feet and define consistent 11-foot travel and turn lanes with 2-foot shoulders on either side of the road. The existing sidewalks along both sides of the street will be replaced with an 8-foot asphalt shared-use sidepath separated from the roadway by a five-foot grassed buffer. The shared-use sidepath is provided on the west side of St. James Avenue through the length of the project area and on the east side of the roadway from Merida Street to just north of Hobart Street, where the bicycle accommodation transitions to a striped five-foot bicycle lane with a five-foot sidewalk for pedestrians. Intersection radii are proposed to be modified in order to accommodate WB-50 vehicles for the left turns and northbound and southbound right turns. Due to the skew of Carew Street, it is not possible to accommodate large trucks making right turns onto St. James Avenue so a passenger car was used to determine these radii.

The proposed 25% design consists of a combination of micromilling with HMA overlay and full-depth construction along St. James Boulevard to provide a four-lane roadway through its intersection with St. James Avenue. The proposed design will define consistent 11-foot travel and turn lanes with 5-foot shoulders on either side of the road to accommodate bicyclists. East of St. James Avenue on the northern side the existing sidewalk along the street will be replaced with an 8-foot asphalt shared-use sidepath separated from the roadway by a three-foot grassed buffer. Five-foot bicycle lanes/shoulders are provided west of St. James Avenue, and east of St. James Avenue on the southern side.

The proposed 25% design consists of a combination of micromilling with HMA overlay and full-depth construction along Carew Street to provide a two-lane roadway with exclusive left turn lanes at its intersection with St. James Avenue. The proposed design will define consistent 11-foot travel and turn lanes with 2-foot shoulders on either side of the road. The existing sidewalks along both sides of the street will be replaced with an 8-foot asphalt shared-use sidepath separated from the roadway by a five-foot grassed buffer. At the elementary school a pull-off will be provided for drop-off and pick-up. A Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) will be provided at the crossing of Carew Street at Hobart Street.

## **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

It is expected that in order to construct the majority of the proposed project, the construction will be phased to shift traffic to one side of the roadway while completing work along the other side of the roadway. Travel lane widths of 10 to 11-foot will remain open through the work zones. It is expected that two-way traffic flow will be maintained throughout the construction period along St. James Avenue. As part of this project, vehicular traffic flow will be maintained, pedestrian routes will be maintained with the appropriate detours and Architectural Access Board (AAB) compliant temporary wheelchair ramps, and bicycle access will be accommodated within the traffic flow and/or along pedestrian routes.

St. James Avenue is a critical link within the East Springfield area. As a result, traffic control plans that involve detouring traffic away from St. James Avenue have not been considered for this project.

## **UTILITIES**

Existing water and sewer structures will be adjusted as necessary to meet the grade of the proposed roadway. Existing utility poles will be adjusted and/or relocated as necessary.

## **RIGHT OF WAY**

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

## **PROJECT COST**

The estimated cost of the project is \$5,000,000. This project is funded under the Federal Aid Program whereby 90% of the construction cost will be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and 10% of the construction cost will be funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **DESIGN PLNS**

25% Roadway Plans (Progress Print) and Preliminary ROW Plans (Progress Print) are posted at the City of Springfield web site:

<https://www.springfield-ma.gov/dpw/index.php?id=245>

Please note that these plans are at 25% design stage and may change as design progresses.

## **PROJECT STATUS**

The design plans displayed at this 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 Winter of 2023 subject to obtaining all necessary environmental permits and Right-Of Way certificate. The construction is expected to start in Summer of 2023. This project must be programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program in the appropriate Federal Fiscal Year in order for MassDOT to solicit bids for eventual construction.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Springfield, MA  
Improvements on St. James Avenue at St. James Boulevard and Carew Street  
Project File No. 608565

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:

Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer  
MassDOT – Highway Division  
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973  
Attn: Highway Design

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 presentation.

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.**

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Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E.  
Chief Engineer  
MassDOT – Highway Division  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Virtual Public Hearing  
IMPROVEMENTS ON ST. JAMES AVENUE AT ST. JAMES BOULEVARD AND  
CAREW STREET  
**SPRINGFIELD**  
Project File No. 608565  
Attn: Project Management

