



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

April, 02, 2025

FOR THE PROPOSED

**Birnie Ave Reconstruction Project At Gerena School Pedestrian Tunnel
Project No 610664.
Highway Design**

IN THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, 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 Description: Springfield – Reconstruction Of Birnie Avenue At Gernena School Pedestrian
Tunnel
Project File No. 610664**

A Design Public Hearing will be held to present the design for the proposed project in Springfield, MA.

WHERE: German Gerena School
200 Birnie Avenue
Springfield, MA 01107

WHEN: Wednesday, April 2nd , 2025 @ 6:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed 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 of Birnie ave and structural improvement to the pedestrian tunnel under Bernie ave.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The city and 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. 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. 610664. 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
P.E.
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE,
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

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.

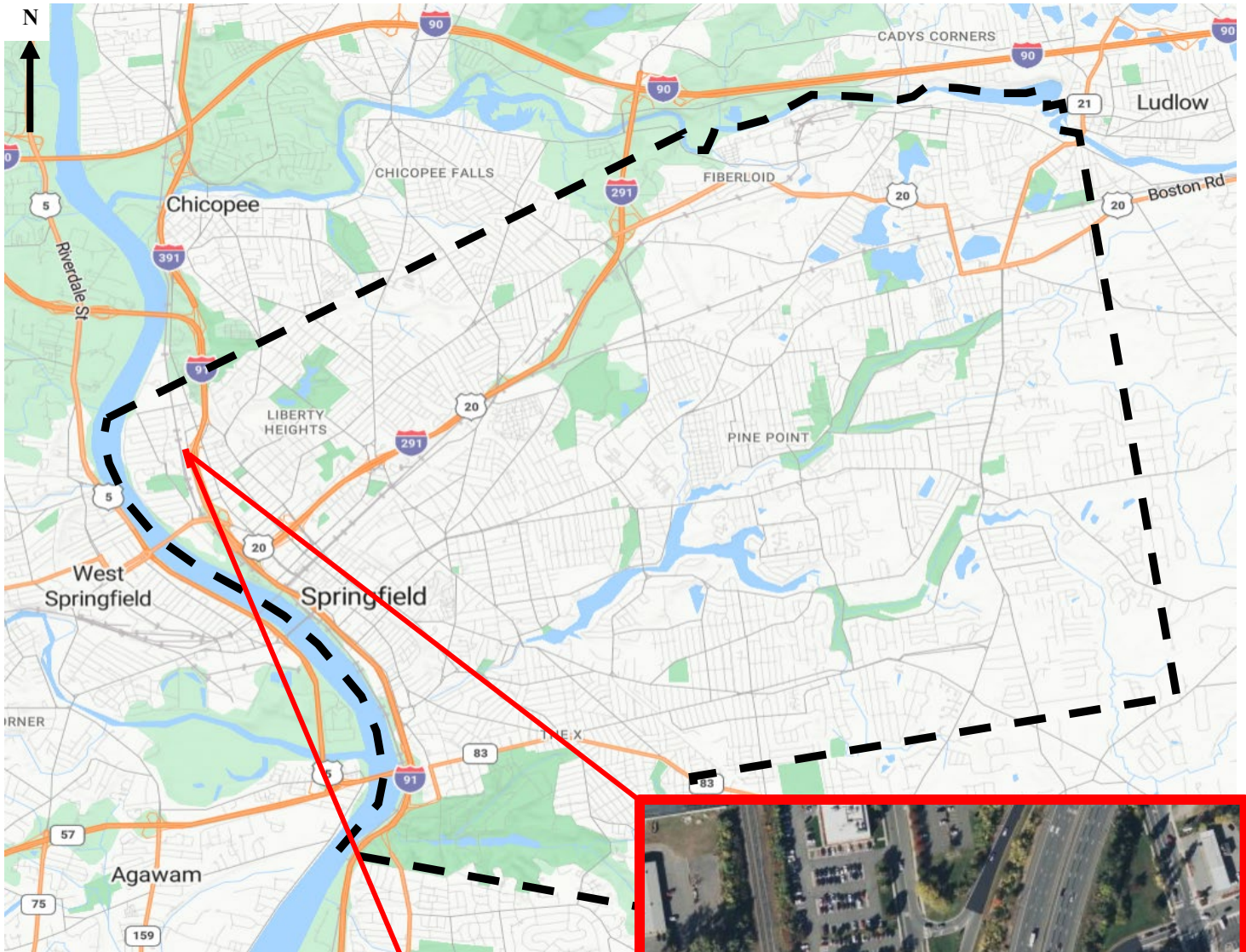
4. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ACQUIRED PARCELS?

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.

LOCUS MAP



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

WHY WAS THIS PROJECT INITIATED?

The project was initiated due to ongoing water infiltration that is occurring in the pedestrian tunnel that runs below Birnie Avenue into the lower level of the Gerena School. This water infiltration has led to associated deterioration to the tunnel structure. Additionally, due to speeding concerns along Birnie Avenue, traffic calming measures are included with the roadway reconstruction.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED WORK?

To address water infiltration to the tunnel, some repairs are going to occur to the tunnel structure itself. Repairs include a new concrete topping slab on top of the existing beams. The concrete topping slab will serve as the foundation for the roadway pavement to create a raised speed table. The speed table will slow vehicles down while also sending stormwater runoff away from the tunnel structure. To further address water infiltration, new water protection barriers will be applied to the outside of the tunnel structure as well as the installation of groundwater pumps.

As part of the roadway reconstruction, new pavement will be placed from the I-91 Southbound off-ramp to the southern Gerena School parking lot entrance. The roadway will be restriped to allow two travel lanes plus a bus queuing lane for school operations, which is consistent with the existing conditions. The sidewalk opposite the school will be reconstructed following ADA criteria. The sidewalk adjacent to the Gerena School will be reconstructed as a shared use path which moves bicycles to the sidewalk level, fully separated from vehicles and bus queuing area.

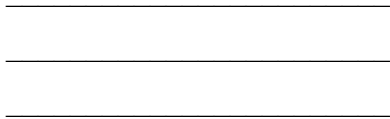
WHAT IS THE CONSTRUCTION APPROACH?

The project will be phased in two primary stages. During Stage 1, the left lane (eastern lane) of Birnie Avenue will be fully closed to traffic from the I-91 Southbound off-ramp through the southern Gerena School parking lot entrance. During Stage 1, the eastern half of the proposed work will be built. During construction, pedestrians will still have full use of the sidewalk along the school property. Also, vehicles coming off of the I-91 Southbound ramp will be required to stop and yield to vehicles traveling on Birnie Avenue.

During Stage 2, the right lane and bus queuing area (western lanes) of Birnie Avenue will be fully closed from the I-91 Southbound off-ramp through the southern Gerena School parking lot entrance. During Stage 2, the western half of the proposed work will be built. During construction, pedestrians will have full use of the newly constructed sidewalk on the eastern side of the road. There will be on-going coordination with the School to ensure access to the school is always provided. Also, vehicles coming off of the I-91 Southbound ramp will be required to stop and yield to vehicles traveling on Birnie Avenue.

During both stages, the work zones will be secured with concrete barriers and fencing. Construction signage and temporary pavement markings will also be used.

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

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

RE: Public Hearing
Birnie Ave Reconstruction Project At Gerena School Pedestrian Tunnel
Springfiled
Project File No. 610664
Attn: Project Management

