



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

**FOR THE PROPOSED
FISHER STREET SUPERSTRUCTURE REPLACEMENT over MBTA
Project No. 607434
Bridge No. W-24-010
Major Projects Section**

IN THE TOWN OF WESTBOROUGH, 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. 607434

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be published on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Westborough Superstructure Replacement, (Pedestrian Bridge), W-24-010, Fisher Street Over CSX

WHEN: Thursday, February 18, 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Westborough Superstructure 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 involves the superstructure replacement of Bridge No. W-24-010, which carries Fisher Street over MBTA (formerly CSX) in the Town of Westborough (MassDOT Project File No. 607434). The existing one (1) span steel truss and one (1) span girder-floorbeam system will be replaced with a single (1) span prefabricated steel truss pedestrian/bicycle bridge. The existing bridge, which is over 100 years old, is closed to all traffic and due to its structurally deficient condition. The two concrete abutments will be re-used and the existing intermediate steel pier will be removed.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The **Town of Westborough/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.

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: **Major Projects, Project File No. 607434**. 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

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 ISSUES

A secure Right of Way is required for this project. If your property, or a portion of it, must be acquired by the State or Municipality for highway purposes in the interest of all people of the Commonwealth, your rights are fully protected under the law. Procedures are different depending on whether the State or Municipality is making the acquisitions. Briefly, here are some of the answers to questions you might ask.

State Acquisitions

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.

MassDOT also provides for dispute resolution through the administrative settlement process. You can initiate this by providing documentation and information relative to the value of your property, including but not limited to, an appraisal for our review. If resolution cannot be reached through the administrative settlement process, you can still bring a claim in court for additional monies at any time during the three-year period.

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.

Municipal Acquisitions

1. REASON FOR PROJECT?

The construction of this project will serve the needs of local users as well as those of the greater surrounding communities. The proposed enhancement has been designed to service 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 process and procedures used in acquiring any necessary rights required for the proposed project.

3. APPRAISALS, DONATIONS, RIGHTS OF ENTRY?

Impacted Property owners are entitled to an appraisal and Just Compensation, however, municipalities will often seek donations of parcels as 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 temporary 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, etc.

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

When donations or Rights of Entry 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 and review 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 (Just compensation), for the rights to be acquired.

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 from the date of the recording of the acquired parcel(s). The owner(s) may be paid pro tanto (for the time being). The pro tanto payment will not prejudice the court's final decision.

WESTBOROUGH

Fisher Street over MBTA



LOCATION MAP

Scale: No Scale

Project Overview:
Fisher Street Bridge Superstructure Replacement over MBTA
Westborough, MA

Project Location:

The bridge is located in the Town of Westborough and carries Fisher Street over the MBTA Railroad. The project limits on Fisher Street extend to approximately 660 feet north of the bridge and 120 feet south of the bridge, resulting in a total project length of approximately 900 feet.

Project Purpose:

The primary focus of the project is to replace the existing structurally deficient bridge superstructure with a prefabricated pedestrian/bicycle bridge. The existing bridge has been closed since 1987 due to significant deterioration. Pedestrians are still accessing the bridge and using it as a crossing over the MBTA tracks.

Proposed Improvements:

The existing superstructure will be replaced with a new superstructure that will support bicycle and pedestrian traffic only. Vehicular traffic will not be allowed over the new bridge. The proposed structure will be comprised of a single-span prefabricated steel truss supported on the existing substructure. The new bridge will span a distance of 115'-6". The entirety of the proposed structure will have an exposed concrete deck and will support a 14'-0" wide shared-use path. The existing abutments will largely be retained, with only minor reconstruction of the tops required to accommodate the new structure. The existing intermediate steel pier will be removed in its entirety, and the existing concrete pier foundation will be partially demolished to below the existing grade.

At the approaches to the bridge, Fisher Street will be reconstructed as a shared-use path. The path will be 14'-0" at the south approach and 10'-0" wide, minimum, at the north approach. Both approaches will be constructed with full-depth pavement including an asphalt surface. Timber fencing will be installed within the project limits where required to protect users where there are steep side slopes adjacent to the path, in addition to tree clearing/trimming and new pavement markings.

Traffic Management:

Fisher Street over the bridge has been closed to vehicular traffic for many years and will remain closed in the proposed condition. Therefore, a vehicular detour will not be required for the bridge replacement. The structure will be fully closed to all users, including pedestrians, during its reconstruction. Temporary barriers, fencing and signage will be installed at both ends of the bridge indicating will that the road/path is closed to traffic and to prevent the public from accessing the work area.

Property Impacts:

Some temporary and permanent easements will be required for the reconstruction of the south approach to the bridge on the MBTA railroad property. These easements are necessary for slope work, guardrail installation and other construction incidental to the bridge replacement. The

majority of the project is within the limits of town layout or the railroad layout owned by the MBTA.

Utility Impacts:

The existing high-tension overhead wires parallel to the MBTA tracks will be retained during construction. The existing communication wires which run parallel to the Fisher Street will be relocated to temporary utility poles west of the bridge to facilitate its replacement. The existing electric wires which run parallel to Fisher Street will be temporarily de-energized and removed by the utility owner prior to the start of construction. After construction is complete, all overhead utilities which run parallel to Fisher Street will be re-installed onto new utility poles in a similar alignment to the existing configuration. It is anticipated that the installation of street/pedestrian scale lighting will not be included in the project.

Environmental Permits:

Replacement of the bridge and reconstruction of the approach roadways will require some tree removal and tree trimming within the project limits. There are no wetland resource areas within the project limits and therefore no impacts to any wetland resources as part of this project.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodation:

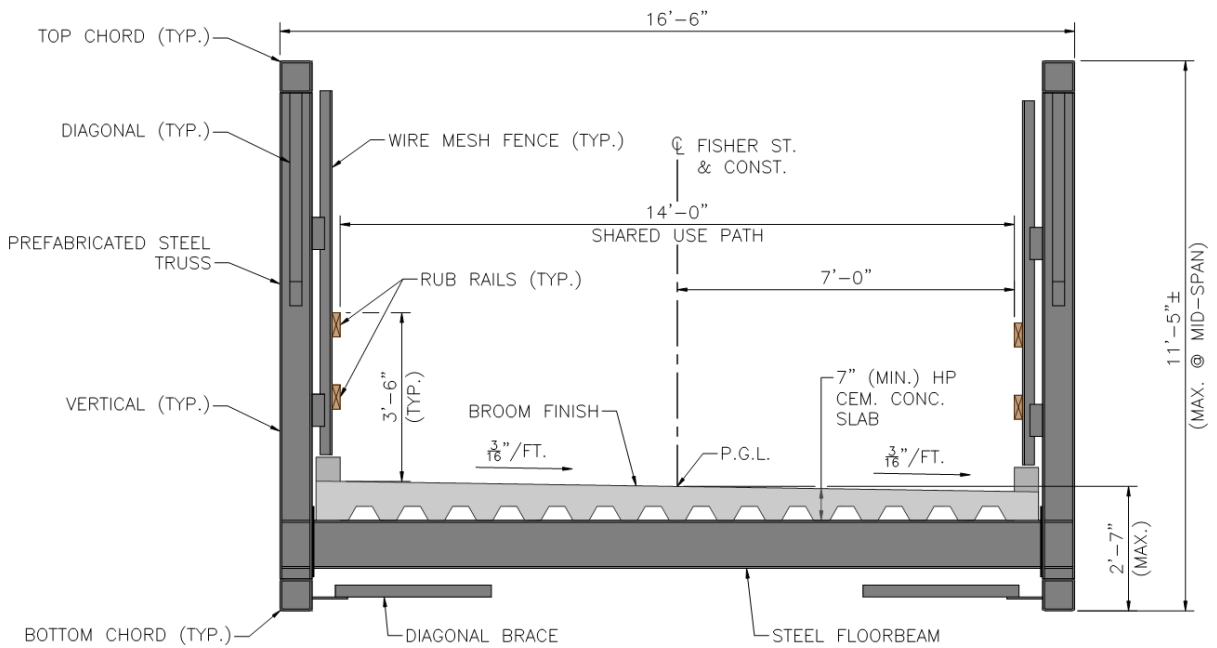
Roadside hazard countermeasures will be implemented along the shared-use path within the project limits. New timber fencing will be installed where required in accordance with the AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities. Reflective pavement markings will be installed along the new path. Signage will be provided as required at the ends of the path where the path transitions to Smith Parkway at the northern project limit and back to the Fisher Street roadway at the southern project limit. Bollards will also be installed at each end of the bridge to prevent vehicles from accessing it.

Project Status and Schedule:

The project plans on display in the public hearing presentation are in the 25% preliminary design stage. Comments from this 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 early Summer of 2021 with construction beginning in the Winter of 2021/2022.



Existing Fisher Street Bridge - Structurally Deficient Requires Full Replacement



Proposed Bridge Cross Section



Existing West Elevation View of Bridge



Rendering of Proposed Bridge – West Elevation

Project Questions:
Fisher Street over MBTA
Westborough, MA

1. Will the bridge deck be timber or concrete?

The bridge deck will be exposed concrete due to the additional long-term maintenance requirements of a timber deck.

2. What modes of transportation will be allowed over the new bridge?

The new bridge will be for pedestrians and bicycles only. Vehicular traffic will not be allowed over the bridge.

3. Will there be street lighting on the new bridge and its approaches?

Street lighting will not be installed under this project. It is envisioned that this will be a dawn to dusk facility.

4. Will emergency vehicles be able to drive across the bridge?

The proposed bridge will be able to support smaller emergency vehicles such as an ambulance or small truck. Bollards will be in place at each end of the bridge. The bollards will be removable with locks so that they can be removed in the case of an emergency or if required for maintenance purposes.

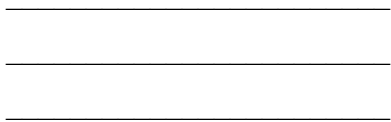
5. Will other motorized vehicles be allowed across the bridge?

Motorized vehicles aside from maintenance and emergency vehicles will not be allowed to cross the bridge as it would create potential safety issues with pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

6. What will be the color of proposed bridge?

The color currently proposed for the new bridge is black.

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

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RE: Virtual Public Hearing
FISHER STREET SUPERSTRUCTURE REPLACEMENT over MBTA
WESTBOROUGH
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