



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

JUNE 21, 2022

FOR THE PROPOSED

**Intersection Improvements at Route 7 and Route 43
Project No. 610716**

Project Management

IN THE TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN, 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. 610716

A Live Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Intersection Improvements at Route 7 and Route 43 project in **Williamstown, MA**.

WHEN: 7:00pm-8:00pm, June 21, 2022

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Intersection Improvements at Route 7 and Route 43 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 constructing a roundabout at the intersection of Route 7 and Route 43 to improve safety and operations. Pedestrian connections between The Store at Five Corners and Bloedel Park will be improved with a new marked crosswalk and accessible ramps to cross the south leg of Route 7. Landscaping enhancements are proposed to create a welcoming gateway to Williamstown.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. **MassDOT 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. Lavalley, 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. 610716**. 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.

This Live Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be hosted on the internet at www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings.

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

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?

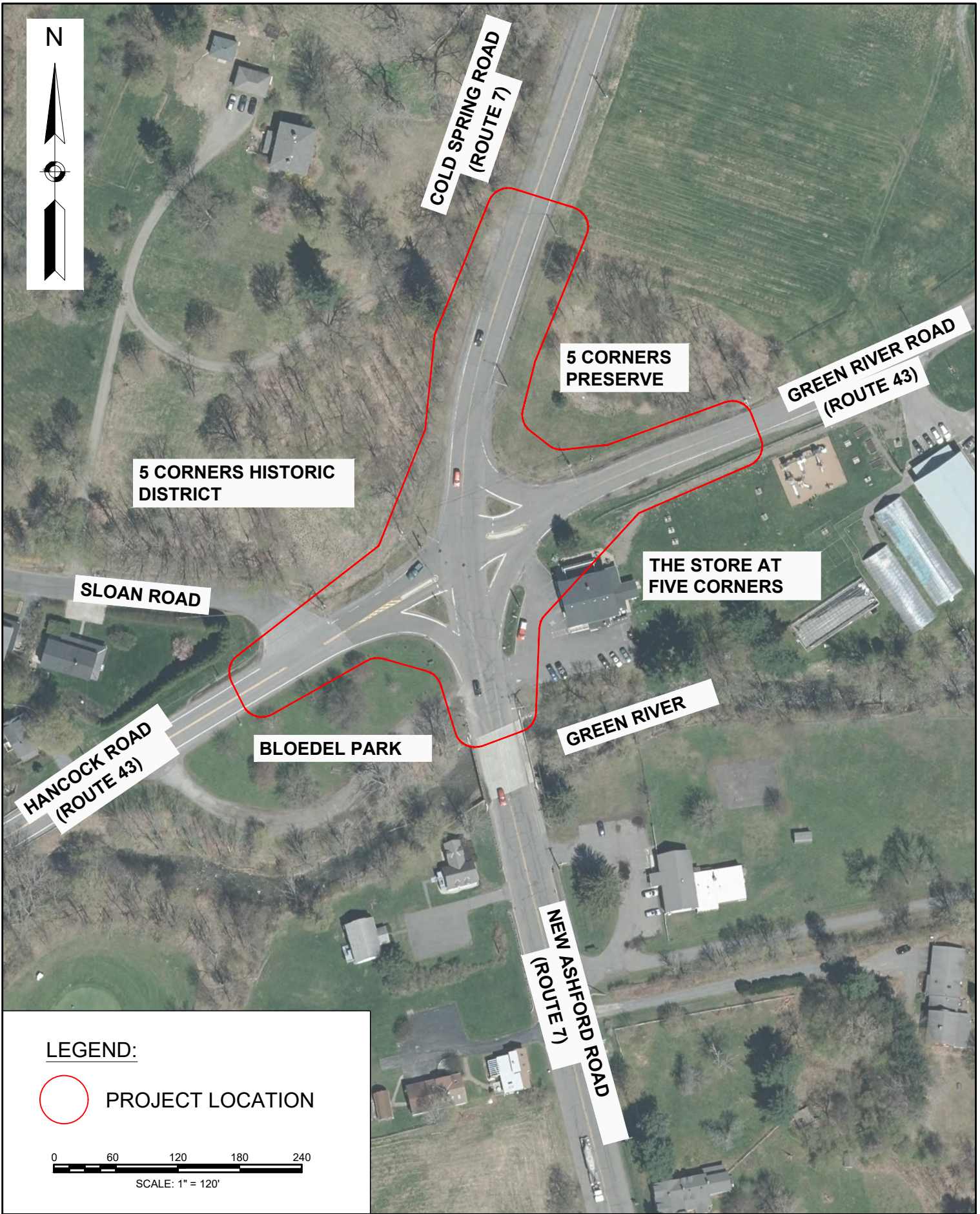
No. If, after the figure established as market value has been offered to the owner, the owner feels he or she is not being offered a fair price, he or she has the right, within three years, to appeal to the courts. Pending a court decision, he or she can be paid on a "pro-tanto" basis (or "for the time 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.



Intersection Improvements at Route 7 and Route 43
Project No. 610716
Williamstown, MA

PROJECT LOCATION

The intersection of Route 43 (Green River Road/Hancock Road) at Route 7 (Cold Spring Road/New Ashford Road) is located in the southern portion of Williamstown, MA. Route 7 provides access to New Ashford to the south and Williamstown to the north. The intersection is located near The Store at Five Corners, Bloedel Park and the Williamstown Historical Museum.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to improve traffic operations and safety at the intersection of Route 7 and Route 43 by replacing the existing stop-controlled intersection with a roundabout. The existing intersection configuration poses safety issues based on high vehicle speeds along Route 7 and limited visibility for drivers looking to turn off of Route 43. The project includes a roundabout designed to accommodate large vehicles while slowing traffic and providing more clear operations, an accessible crosswalk connection between The Store at Five Corners and Bloedel Park, as well as landscaping enhancements to create a welcoming gateway into Williamstown.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The following proposed improvements were developed to address the existing deficiencies and are based on an examination of existing conditions, known deficiencies, future traffic volumes, and discussions with MassDOT and Williamstown officials:

- Install a modern roundabout at the intersection to reduce the number of crashes and to simplify/clarify operations;
- Provide geometric enhancements such as deflections to slow motorists on approach to the intersection, particularly for the approach from the Route 7 southbound leg, which includes a significant downhill grade towards the intersection;
- Accommodate a WB-67 design vehicle using mountable truck turning aprons where required;
- Maintain vehicular access to and from The Store at Five Corners, Bloedel Park and the nearby Sloan Road;
- Establish an accessible pedestrian connection between the Store at Five Corners and Bloedel Park across Route 7;
- Provide new roadway lighting at the intersection to improve visibility at night;
- Provide new pavement markings and MUTCD compliant signs throughout the project;
- Enhance the aesthetics of the intersection through landscaping and gateway treatments; and
- Make improvements to the existing drainage system as necessary to address drainage concerns and improve stormwater quality.

MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC DURING CONSTRUCTION

All roadways within the project will remain open to traffic throughout construction. Construction phasing at the intersection will allow one lane to be maintained on all approaches during peak hours. Occasional short traffic disruptions may occur, but every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience to the public. Pedestrian and vehicular access to abutting properties will be maintained at all times, except for brief periods of time during which abutters will be notified in advance.

RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

The proposed improvements will require temporary easements affecting two abutting properties to accommodate construction activity and roadway grading. Additional details regarding the location and size of the affected areas will be confirmed in later design stages.

PROJECT COST

The preliminary construction cost of this project at this design stage is approximately \$3.1 Million.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The design plans presented this evening represent a 25% design plan. The project has been programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan for Federal Fiscal Year 2023.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Williamstown, MA
Intersection Improvements at Route 7 and Route 43
Project File No. 610716

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 or you may mail this sheet with any additional comments to:

Carrie E. Lavalley, 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
Intersection Improvements at Route 7 and Route 43
WILLIAMSTOWN
Project File No. 610716
Attn: Project Management

