



**DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2023  
6:30 PM**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**RECONSTRUCTION OF ROUTE 101 SOUTH  
Project No. 609244  
Highway Design**

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM, 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. 609244**

A Design Public Hearing will be held by MassDOT to present the design for the proposed Reconstruction of Route 101 South from the Ashburnham/Gardner Town Line east to the intersection of Corey Hill Road/Williams Road, in **Ashburnham, MA.**

WHERE: Ashburnham Town Hall Auditorium  
32 Main Street  
Ashburnham, MA 01430

WHEN: **Thursday, September 14, 2023 @ 6:30PM**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Reconstruction of the Route 101 South 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 the reconstruction and widening of approximately 2 miles of Route 101 South from the Ashburnham/Gardner Town Line east to the intersection of Corey Hill Road/Williams Road. The proposed improvements include the addition of 5-foot shoulder/bike lanes throughout the project corridor on both sides of Route 101, except between Cross Street and Old County/Turnpike Road, where a new 10-foot-wide Shared Use Path will accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists on the west side of Route 101. Additional work includes improvement of the roadway alignment to minimize the impacts to adjacent properties, wetlands, and utilities; pavement reclamation; and reconstruction of the deteriorated drainage system. The project is intended to improve safety and provide connectivity for all roadway users and pedestrians. Traffic will be maintained throughout construction as well as access to all properties.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. **The Town of Ashburnham 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 Carrie Lavalley, P.E., Acting Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: **Project Management**, Project File No. 609244. 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](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 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

CARRIE 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 Lavallee, 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.

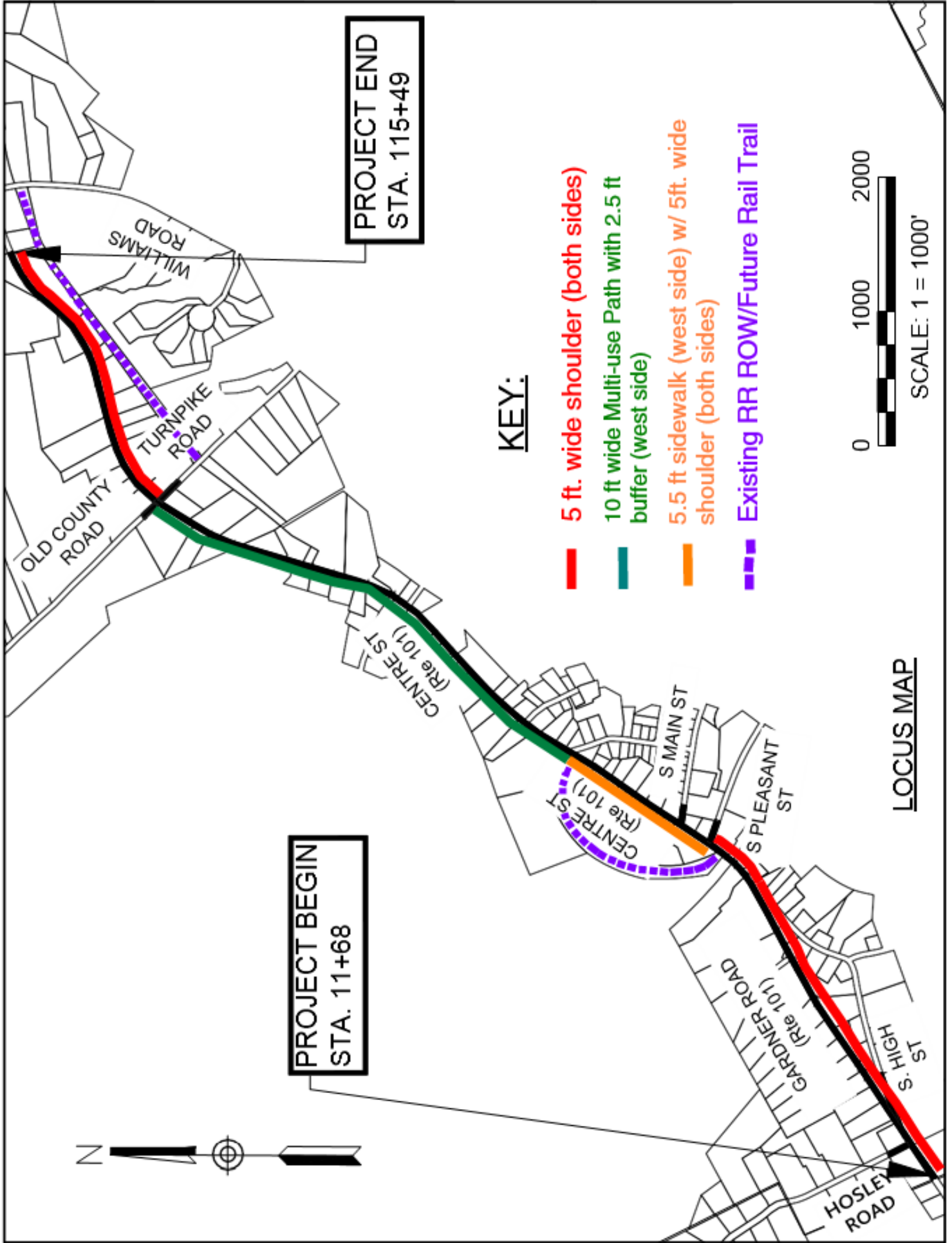
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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

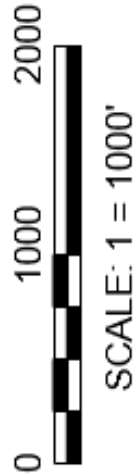


**PROJECT BEGIN**  
STA. 11+68

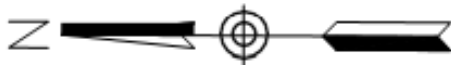
**PROJECT END**  
STA. 115+49

**KEY:**

- 5 ft. wide shoulder (both sides)
- 10 ft wide Multi-use Path with 2.5 ft buffer (west side)
- 5.5 ft sidewalk (west side) w/ 5ft. wide shoulder (both sides)
- - - Existing RR ROW/Future Rail Trail



**LOCUS MAP**



### **Project Location:**

The proposed project is located in the Town of Ashburnham on Route 101 South. Route 101 (Gardner Road & Center Street as it passes through the former small rural village of South Ashburnham) is a two-lane road with a Functional Classification of “Urban Minor Arterial”. The limits of the proposed project are from the intersection of Corey Hill Road heading west to the Ashburnham/Gardner Town Line, an approximate length of 2 miles. Route 101 South is a relatively narrow section of country road with a former rural village in the center of the project. The beginning section of road at the Gardner/Ashburnham Town Line is straight with a good sight distance and a posted speed limit of 40 mph. The rest of the project is posted at 30 mph within the village and 35 mph near the end of the project as it intersects with Corey Hill Road.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose and need of the project is to rehabilitate the existing pavement which is in poor condition, improve safety by providing a consistent roadway cross-section and shoulder widths, improve existing pedestrian facilities in the small rural village, provide for bicycle accommodation and construct a section of shared use path that is anticipated to provide a connection to anticipated future rail trail projects.

### **Existing Conditions:**

The existing roadway has inconsistent width that varies from 25 - 33 ft. with 10-11 ft. wide travel lanes and 2-4 ft. shoulders. Sidewalks currently exist within the middle 1/3 of the project in the small rural village of South Ashburnham. The roadway is in poor condition with moderate rutting, cracking, edge raveling, filled potholes, and patched utility trenches. The sidewalks are in equally poor condition and are not ADA compliant. Roadway drainage structures exhibit pavement settlement around the basins and appear to be undersized and filled with debris.

### **Proposed Project:**

The proposed project scope includes the full depth reclamation of the existing pavement section, widening the existing roadway to accommodate 2-11 foot travel lanes with 5-foot shoulders for the beginning and end sections of the project. The middle portion of the project within the rural village will have a 5'-6" sidewalk on the west side of Route 101 between South Pleasant & Cross Streets and the remaining portion of roadway between Cross St. and Old County Road will have a 10-foot shared use path on the west side with a 2'-6" buffer between the roadway. The project also includes drainage improvements, replacement of existing and new sections of highway guardrail with the appropriate leading/trailing end sections, new pavement markings, signage, and other incidental work.

### **Right of Way:**

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The towns are responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing. Right-of-way plans can be made available to affected property owners upon request.

### **Maintenance of Traffic During Construction:**

The current proposed construction plan involves using conventional construction utilizing alternating one-way traffic for certain phases of the project with the remaining phases utilizing two-way traffic with possible lane shifts. The new roadway will follow the existing profile and alignment. Driveway access will be maintained throughout the construction of the project and sidewalk access, where it exists now, will be maintained with possible short-term closures. Local street access will generally be maintained.

### **Project Schedule:**

The project plans on display are at the 25% preliminary design stage. Comments from the public hearing will be incorporated into the final design plans to the maximum extent possible. It is anticipated that the project will be advertised for construction bids in early 2025.

### **Project Cost:**

The estimated construction cost for the project is approximately \$5.9 million. Funding for this project will be by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Federal Highway Administration.



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Ashburnham, MA  
Reconstruction of Route 101 South  
Project File No. 609244

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:

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.**

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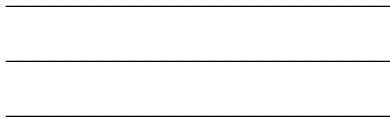
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Carrie E. Lavalley, P.E.  
Chief Engineer  
MassDOT – Highway Division  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Public Hearing  
RECONSTRUCTION OF ROUTE 101 SOUTH  
**ASHBURNHAM**  
Project File No. 609244  
Attn: Project Management

