



**VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

**JANUARY 7, 2025**

**FOR THE PROPOSED**

**BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, P-10-040, PONTOOSUC AVE  
OVER WEST BRANCH HOUSATONIC RIVER RESERVOIR**

**Project No. 612168  
Bridge No P-10-040  
Highway Design**

**IN THE CITY OF PITTSFIELD, 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 VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

**Project File No. 612168**

A Virtual Public Informational Meeting will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Bridge Replacement, Pontoosuc Ave Over West Branch Housatonic River Reservoir project in **Pittsfield, MA.**

**WHEN: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, January 7, 2025**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this meeting is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Bridge Replacement, Pontoosuc Ave Over West Branch Housatonic River Reservoir project. All views and comments submitted in response to the meeting will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

**PROPOSAL:** The proposed project consists of replacing the existing bridge to ensure both the safety of the traveling public and access to businesses and residential homes in the vicinity of the project location. The recommended alternative is a full replacement founded on deep foundations with the existing substructure removed in its entirety. A minimum of 5-foot sidewalks will be provided by the proposed bridge and approach roadways.

The bridge will be closed to all modes of transportation during construction. There is no potential for a temporary vehicular or pedestrian bridge given the site characteristics and adjacent properties. Vehicle and pedestrian detours are required to provide adequate accessibility accommodation.

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

This meeting 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 and 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 meeting.

This meeting will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

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

## **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

### PITTSFIELD- BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, P-10-040, PONTOOSUC AVE OVER WEST BRANCH HOUSATONIC RIVER REVOIR



#### Legend

- Project Area
- Bridge

## PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The Pontoosuc Avenue Bridge is uniquely located immediately upstream of an existing building supported on its own bridge structure. This privately owned structure butts up against the southern edge of the bridge. Immediately upstream of the bridge is an existing retaining wall running parallel to the West Branch Housatonic River Reservoir and supporting the parking lot of an adjacent grocery store. MassDOT determined that the existing Pontoosuc Avenue bridge was in need of either a superstructure replacement or a full replacement. After a full analysis was completed, a full replacement of the existing bridge is the selected alternative. The proposed bridge will consist of an adjacent prestressed concrete deck beam superstructure with a composite concrete deck supported on cantilever abutments founded on micropiles. The existing concrete wingwall running parallel to the road on the northeast corner of the bridge will be replaced with a new concrete wingwall founded on micropiles. However, the upstream retaining wall running parallel to the river will remain in place.

Due to the configuration of the bridge as it relates to the existing upstream retaining wall and downstream building-bridge structure, the proposed abutments will be constructed in the same location as the existing abutments. This will be done to maintain the existing hydraulic capacity of the river through the two adjacent bridges. Based on a scour analysis performed at the crossing, deep foundations utilizing micropiles were selected to support the new abutments.

The existing out-to-out bridge width is 41'-4½", with a curb-to-curb width of just under 30 feet and two sidewalks: one 7-foot sidewalk and one 5-foot sidewalk. The proposed out-to-out bridge width is only 1-foot wider for a total of 42'-4½". However, the cross section will be adjusted to incorporate two 5-foot bike lanes, two 10-foot travel lanes, and two 5.5-foot sidewalks to meet current standards and improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation through this location. The proposed approach roadway and bridge curb-to-curb width is 30 feet, which exceeds the minimum width required to accommodate current design standards. The existing normal 2% crown across the roadway section will be maintained to accommodate drainage. Changes to the horizontal alignment and vertical profile were minimized as much as practical to avoid unnecessary abutter impacts, however, the horizontal alignment did require a slight change from the existing to accommodate the proposed roadway cross section.

Bridge rail and standard precast highway guardrail transitions are proposed on both ends of the upstream (north) side of the bridge, which will improve compliance with MassDOT standards and regulations. New steel guardrail is proposed from the northwest corner of the bridge that extends towards the Pontoosuc Avenue and Wahconah Street intersection, which will improve vehicular safety at the intersection. Currently, there are no safety measures between the intersection and adjacent parking lot, which presents a risk of vehicles unintentionally encroaching upon the parking lot. The existing signalized intersection will remain unchanged.

Existing utilities will be temporarily relocated as required to accommodate construction of the new bridge. Some utilities, such as the existing water line that runs underneath the footings of the existing bridge and the gas line mounted to the existing superstructure, will be permanently relocated to accommodate the geometry of the new bridge. Relocation of the water line will also improve its offset from an existing sewer line that will remain in its current location.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION

FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Pittsfield, MA  
Bridge Replacement, P-10-040, Pontoosuc Ave over West Branch Housatonic River Reservoir  
Project File No. 612168

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 meeting transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the meeting.

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.**

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Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please Fold and Tape



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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 Information Meeting  
Bridge Replacement, P-10-040, Pontoosuc Ave  
Over West Branch Housatonic River Reservoir  
**PITTSFIELD**  
Project File No. 612168  
Attn: Project Management

