



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, October 11, 2018

AT

**PITTSFIELD CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
70 ALLEN STREET
PITTSFIELD, MA 01201**

7:00 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

**TRAFFIC SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR MERRILL ROAD AND DALTON
AVENUE (ROUTE 8 AND ROUTE 9)
PROJECT NO. 607760
PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

IN THE TOWN OF PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

**JONATHAN L. 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. 607760

A Design Public Hearing will be held by MassDOT to discuss the construction of the traffic signal Improvements along Route 8/9 (Dalton Avenue/Merrill Road) in Pittsfield MA.

WHERE: Pittsfield City Hall (Council Chambers)
70 Allen Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

WHEN: Thursday, October 11, 2018 at 7:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed traffic signal improvements at nine locations along Route 8/9 (Dalton Avenue and Merrill Road) corridors. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project includes reconstructing nine traffic signals along SR 8 & SR 9 (Dalton Avenue/Merrill Road) corridors with current MUTCD and MassDOT standards and potentially include implementation of adaptive signal control technology to relieve congestion and improve traffic operations along the corridor, thereby reducing delay and driver frustration in the area. The total approximate project length is 7,410 feet (1.40 miles). No geometric changes are proposed, thus keeping the project limited to traffic signal equipment replacement only. Right-of-Way impacts will be minimal.

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 discussed at this hearing.

Written views received by MassDOT subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five (5) days prior to the date of the hearing shall be displayed for public inspection and copying at the time and date listed above. Plans will be on display one-half hour before the hearing begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project. A project handout will be made available on the MassDOT website listed below.

Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the Public Hearing regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Roadway Project Management, Project File No. 607760. Such submissions will also be accepted at the hearing. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked within ten (10) business days of this Public Hearing. Project inquiries may be emailed to dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us

This location is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), fax (857-368-0602), TTD/TTY (857-368-0603) 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 (10) business days before the meeting.

In case of inclement weather, hearing cancellation announcements will be posted on the internet at <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Highway/>

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.

TO SAFEGUARD THE PROPERTY OWNER

If your property, or a portion of it, must be taken by the State for a highway 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 procedure to be followed in acquiring and paying for the property. An appraiser may ask questions needed to arrive at a fair price for your property.

2. **WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR MY PROPERTY?**

Every offer is made to insure that an equitable value is awarded to you for the property, or to appraise the "damage" to the property as a result of the taking. MassDOT appraisers, independent appraisers, MassDOT "Review Appraisers" and a Real Estate Review Board may all contribute in arriving at a fair price. The State also pays a proportionate part of the real estate tax for the current year, and interest from the date the property is acquired.

3. **MUST I ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFER?**

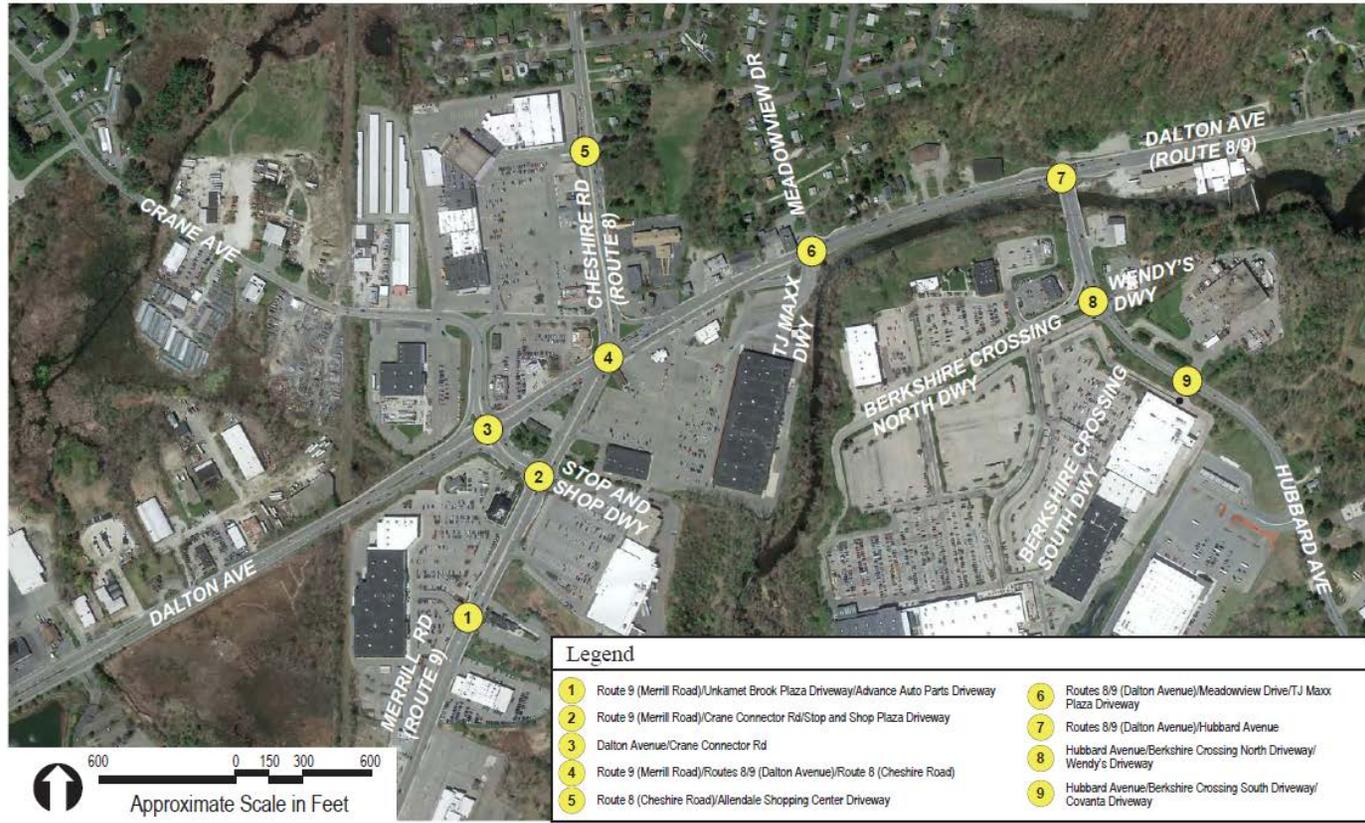
No. If, after the figure established as a fair market value has been offered to the owner, the owner feels he or she is not being offered a fair price, he or she has the right within two years to appeal to the courts. PENDING a court decision, he or she can be paid a "pro tanto" (or "for the time being")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

5. **WHAT HAPPENS IF I MUST RELOCATE?**

In addition to the fair 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.



Pittsfield, Massachusetts



100 Nickerson Road
 Marlborough, MA 01752
 508.786.2200
 www.tetrattech.com

Study Area Intersections

Figure 1

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT LOCATION AND PURPOSE

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is proposing traffic signal improvements at nine locations along Merrill Road and Dalton Avenue (Route 8 and Route 9) corridors to improve traffic operations and reduce congestion in the area. The project extends approximately ¾-mile along Dalton Avenue, from Crane Avenue to Hubbard Avenue to continue onto Hubbard Avenue for approximately ¼-mile south of Dalton Avenue; and also extend approximately ½-mile along Merrill Road/Cheshire Road from Unkamet Plaza driveway to Allendale Shopping Plaza driveway.

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) was conducted in June 2015 at three locations within the study area. These locations experienced high Equivalent Property Damage Only (EPDO) ratings and were subsequently identified for study to establish recommended improvements. The study corridor is eligible to receive Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding for the construction of the proposed improvements. District 1 further identified a closed loop traffic signal system encompassing six other intersections in its vicinity, located along Merrill Road, Dalton Avenue and Hubbard Avenue. The locations of the study intersections are shown in Figure 1.

The purpose of this project is to:

- Enhance safety by reducing vehicular conflicts (reduce crashes)
- Optimize signal timings and lane use to provide safe and efficient traffic flow
- Evaluate the need for adaptive signal control

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

This project is needed to address safety issues identified during the RSA process listed above. Due to the budget limitations, the scope of this project will be focused on traffic signal improvements including evaluation of possible state-of-the-art adaptive signal control technology that will continuously distribute green light time equitably for all traffic movements to improve travel times. This will address all the signal related issues identified in the RSA. Accordingly, the study area includes six additional signalized intersections that are currently included in the closed loop traffic signal system with the three RSA study intersections.

The goal of the project is to improve traffic operations and upgrade existing pedestrian and vehicular traffic signal equipment at nine signalized intersections, namely:

1. Route 9 (Merrill Road)/Unkamet Plaza Driveway/Advance Auto Parts Driveway
2. Route 9 (Merrill Road)/Crane Connector Road/Stop & Shop Plaza Driveway
3. Dalton Avenue/Crane Connector Road
4. Route 9 (Merrill Road)/Routes 8/9 (Dalton Avenue)/Route 8 (Cheshire Road)
5. Route 8 (Cheshire Road)/Allendale Plaza Driveway/West Memorial Park Driveway
6. Routes 8/9 (Dalton Avenue)/Meadowview Drive/TJ Maxx Plaza Driveway
7. Routes 8/9 (Dalton Avenue)/Hubbard Avenue
8. Hubbard Avenue/Berkshire Crossing North Driveway/Wendy's Driveway
9. Hubbard Avenue/Berkshire Crossing South Driveway/Covanta Driveway

The following summarizes key elements of the proposed improvements:

- Traffic signals will be constructed in accordance with MassDOT standard details.
- Signal timings will be updated to meet current MassDOT standards and optimize traffic operations.
- Signal phasing sequences will be optimized to improve progression along the corridors.
- Lane re-striping will be conducted as necessary to provide safe and efficient traffic operations.
- Traffic signal equipment will be replaced, including pedestrian count down signals, APS push buttons and signal heads on mast arms at all study intersections, to meet current MassDOT standards.
- Video detection will be installed to allow for future implementation of adaptive signal control system.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

During typical construction operations, all roadways in the project area will remain open to during construction. Occasional short traffic disruptions and lane/shoulder closures may occur, but every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience to the travelling public. Pedestrian and vehicular access to abutting properties will be maintained throughout construction.

RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

Some permanent easements will be required as part of this project for placing traffic signal mast arm poles and pedestrian signal poles at various locations. Temporary construction easements will also be required. MassDOT will be responsible for securing all necessary easements.

PROJECT COST

The current estimate of the total construction cost of this project is approximately \$2.5 million.

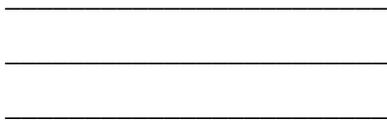
PROJECT STATUS

The design plans are at the 25% design stage. Comments made at this hearing will be reviewed and may be incorporated into the final plans prior to award of the construction contract.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

This project is currently funded for construction in Fiscal Year 2019. The project must be advertised for construction by September 2019 in order to meet the fiscal year funding, with construction anticipated to begin in the spring 2020. The construction duration is anticipated to be 9-12 months.

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
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Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E.
Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Public Hearing
Traffic Signal Improvements along
Route 8/9 (Dalton Avenue/Merrill Road)
Pittsfield, Massachusetts
Project File No. 607760
Roadway Project Management

