



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

SEPTEMBER 26, 2012

AT

HOLYOKE CITY HALL

HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS

7:00 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

**LOWER WESTFIELD ROAD AT HOMESTEAD AVENUE
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

IN HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS

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

**FRANCIS A. DEPAOLA, P.E.
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**THOMAS F. BRODERICK, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 606045

A Design Public Hearing will be held by MassDOT to discuss the proposed intersection improvement project at Lower Westfield Road and Homestead Avenue in Holyoke, MA.

WHERE: Holyoke City Hall, City Council Chambers
536 Dwight Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

WHEN: Wednesday, September 26, 2012 @ 7:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Lower Westfield Road at Homestead Avenue project. All views and comments made at the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of widening both Lower Westfield Road and Homestead Avenue to add turning lanes and updating the traffic signals with new equipment. Shared accommodations for all users have been provided in accordance with applicable guidelines.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The City of Holyoke and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private and public lands, respectively. 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 Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 606045. 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 (617-973-7171), TTD/TTY (617-973-7715), fax (617-973-7311) 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/>

FRANCIS A. DEPAOLA, P.E.
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

THOMAS F. BRODERICK, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER



Deval L. Patrick, Governor
Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor
Richard A. Davey, Secretary & CEO
Frank DePaola, Administrator



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,

Frank DePaola
Administrator, Highway Division

FOR STATE HIGHWAY RIGHT OF WAY

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.

FOR STATE HIGHWAY RIGHT OF WAY (Cont'd)

TO SAFEGUARD THE PROPERTY OWNER

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.

FOR MUNICIPAL RIGHT OF WAY

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FOR MUNICIPAL RIGHT OF WAY (Cont'd)

RIGHT OF WAY ISSUES

A secure right of way is necessary for this project. Temporary construction easements may be required. Your municipality is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. If your property is affected, your rights are fully protected under law.

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?

Town officials will often seek donations, of parcels, where permanent rights are required. This procedure will minimize the acquisition cost for your community.

4. WHAT IS A RIGHT OF ENTRY?

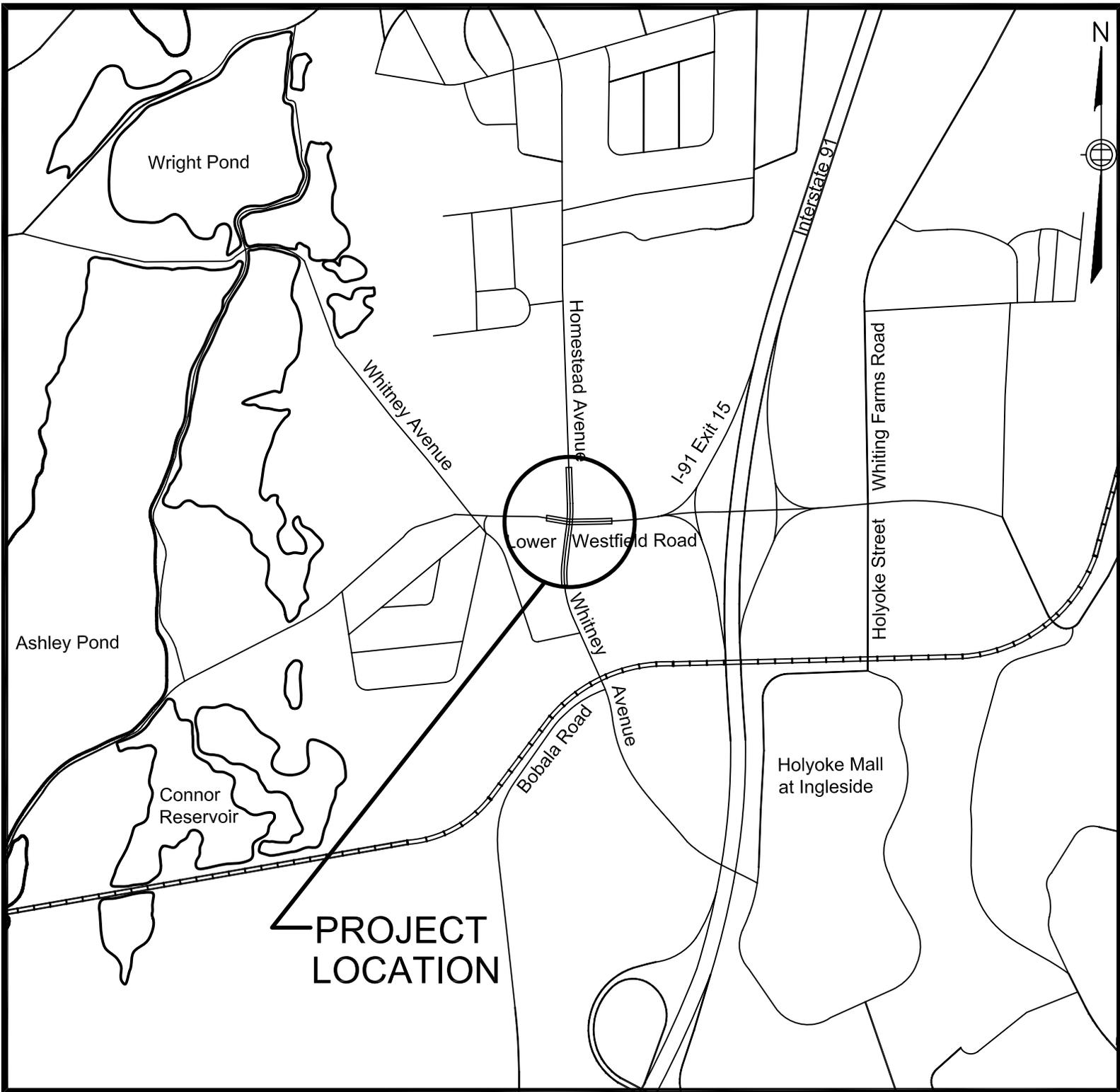
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection,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

5. 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).

6. 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.



Wright Pond

Ashley Pond

Connor Reservoir

PROJECT LOCATION

Lower Westfield Road

Whitney Avenue

Homestead Avenue

Whitney Avenue

Bobala Road

Avenue

I-91 Exit 15

Interstate 91

Whiting Farms Road

Holyoke Street

Holyoke Mall at Ingleside



HOR. SCALE IN FEET



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project proposes to improve the intersection of Lower Westfield Road at Homestead Avenue / Whitney Avenue in Holyoke, MA. The proposed improvements are the result of a recent area-wide transportation study of the Ingleside neighborhood in Holyoke.

Existing Conditions

This four-way signalized intersection operates with a three-phase traffic signal. The eastbound approach on Lower Westfield Road consists of one general approach lane. The westbound approach on Lower Westfield Road consists of one right turn lane and one shared left turn/through lane. The northbound approach on Whitney Avenue consists of one right turn lane and one shared left turn/through lane. The southbound approach on Homestead Avenue consists of one left turn lane and one shared through/right turn lane. There are no pedestrian signals or crosswalks. This intersection is not part of the closed loop system that is present along Lower Westfield Road from the I-91 southbound ramps to Holyoke Street.

Lower Westfield Road

This urban minor arterial runs in an east-west direction between Ingleside Road (Route 5) to the east and Homestead Avenue / Whitney Avenue to the west within the project area. It varies in width from one lane in each direction west of Homestead Avenue to two lanes in each direction in the area of the I-91 Ramps to one lane in each direction east of Whiting Farms Road. Land use along Lower Westfield Road is mainly commercial, and it serves as a connection between I-91 and the Holyoke Mall. There are two commercial driveways (one on either side) approximately 200 feet from the Homestead Avenue / Whitney Avenue intersection. A truck exclusion posted on Lower Westfield Road westbound in the area of Homestead Avenue states “No Commercial Vehicles 8:00 PM to 6:00 AM” and “Left Turn Only” forcing commercial vehicles onto Whitney Avenue. West of its intersection with Homestead Avenue, Lower Westfield Road provides access to a residential area known locally as the Blueberry Hill neighborhood. There are bus stops for the Pioneer Valley Transportation Authority’s (PVRTA) Red 24 bus route on the north and south sides of the road between Homestead Avenue / Whitney Avenue and I-91. The stop on the south side of the road has a shelter. There is no posted speed limit or parking on Lower Westfield Road within the project area.

Homestead Avenue

This two-lane (one lane in each direction) rural major collector runs in a north-south direction between Lower Westfield Road and Cherry Street / Jarvis Avenue west of and parallel to Interstate I-91. Land use along Homestead Avenue is a mix of residential, institutional, and commercial uses. The Lieutenant Elmer J. McMahan Elementary School is located on the corner of Homestead Avenue and Kane Road. Within the study area there is a bituminous concrete sidewalk along the east side of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour northbound and southbound, and a school zone with a 20 mph speed limit is in effect during the McMahan School’s morning and afternoon peak hours. A truck traffic exclusion posted on Homestead Avenue southbound states “Police Take Notice” and is in effect from 8:00 PM to 6:00 AM. There is no parking on Homestead Avenue within the project area.

Whitney Avenue

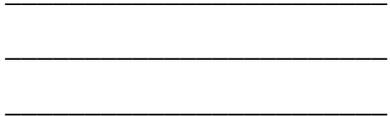
This two-lane (one lane in each direction) rural major collector runs in a north-south direction. It connects Lower Westfield Road and Homestead Avenue to the Holyoke Mall and to Route 5/Route 141 (Riverdale Street/Main Street) via Highland Avenue. The posted speed limit is 30 miles per hour for the southbound direction. Whitney Avenue serves the commercial area of Bobala Road and the Crossroads Business Park on Kelly Way. Land uses in the area primarily consist of business and medical office buildings with residential along the west side of the roadway. One of the residential driveways is within 50 feet of the intersection with Lower Westfield Road and Homestead Avenue. There is no parking on Whitney Avenue within the project area.

Proposed Improvements

The proposed improvements at this intersection include increased roadway capacity, improved geometrics, and new traffic signal equipment. The following is a description of the proposed improvements:

- The existing intersection alignment will be maintained, however, the westbound Lower Westfield Road and southbound Homestead Avenue approaches will be widened to provide more capacity.
 - The proposed Lower Westfield Road westbound approach will consist of an exclusive left turn lane, a shared left turn/through lane, and an exclusive channelized right turn lane.
 - The modified southbound approach, Homestead Avenue, will provide double left turn lanes, and a shared through/right lane.
- Four foot shoulders will be provided Homestead Avenue, Whitney Avenue and the east leg of Lower Westfield Road.
- Pedestrian amenities such as pedestrian signal heads, push buttons, crosswalks and wheelchair ramps will be provided.
- As part of the new signal equipment, new vehicle detection for all approaches to accommodate fully-actuated signal control is also proposed.
- The signal phasing will include exclusive phases for both the southbound and westbound approaches given the proposed geometry.
- A bus pull-out compliant with the PVRTA standards will be installed on the south side of Lower Westfield, just east of the intersection near the location of the existing bus shelter.
- The full width of the roadway will be milled and overlaid within the project limits.

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
Appropriate
Postage Here

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E.
Chief Engineer
MassDOT, Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Public Hearing
Lower Westfield Rd./Homestead Ave.
Holyoke, MA
Project File No. 606045
Project Management

