

Main Street Corridor Project

Growing communities require infrastructure investment. Primary areas of investment are schools and roads. This project aims to deliver that investment in the most cost-effective way, while improving the safety and efficiency of the Main Street Corridor for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The project represents a forward investment in our downtown to benefit the community, as well as benefit current and future businesses that generate tax revenue and provide amenities for Hopkinton residents.

How will this project improve downtown Hopkinton?

- Realigned 85/135 Intersection will reduce traffic queue lengths and delays, and improve safety at a high accident intersection as identified by MassDOT
- ADA compliance throughout project limits will make downtown safer for more of our population
- Bicycle lanes separated from vehicle traffic will enable safer passage for cars, pedestrians, cyclists; with appropriate safety features and signage to promote safety
- New pavement will improve safety, traffic flow and enhance roadways
- New drainage infrastructure will address recurrent drainage issues
- New traffic signals will reduce traffic queue lengths and delays
- The traffic signal at Route 85/ 135 will include a bike signal for the separated bike lane
- The project represents a forward investment in downtown to benefit the community and current and future businesses, including significant aesthetic improvements, undergrounding utilities, increased green space, lighting aligned with historic nature of downtown, streetscape improvements that include benches, trash receptacles and bicycle racks

How much will this project cost and how will it be paid for?

Project costs are \$15.45M. Town Meeting already appropriated \$3.4M in 2010 and 2018. The remaining funds are sourced as follows:

- State and Federal contributions account for \$8.3M
- Host Community Agreement (HCA) contributions account for \$3.25M. (This includes mitigation payments from Legacy Farms negotiated during Legacy Farms master planning and from the Mews development on Lumber Street)
- State grant contributions to date account for \$500,000.

No new funding request is coming before Town Meeting – the amounts required have already been raised. If the project is cancelled, due to lack of easements (Article 47) or other reasons, these funds would not be available for other uses; allocations and appropriations are specific to the Main Street corridor project. For example, school funding must be voted as a separate town meeting article.

Could the Town save money by simply paving Main Street and fixing the sidewalks?

- No. The cost to simply mill and overlay Main Street (i.e., re-pave), repair sidewalks and fix some drainage is estimated at \$4.7M (more than the \$3.4M already appropriated), and would not deliver the additional project benefits such as straightening the intersection, drainage, improved pedestrian safety, landscaping and aesthetic enhancements; with no guarantee of passing a Town Meeting vote for appropriation of funds. Re-opening negotiation over already committed mitigation funds puts at risk not only those funds but other financial interests of the town.

How will this project affect parking?

- Overall, including parking on Main Street between Mayhew Street and Ash Street, today there are 110 existing on-street public parking spaces. The project will result in 106 parking spaces throughout the same area. (Two spaces near the Common were removed to address abutter concerns)
- All 106 parking spaces from the Main Street corridor project will meet current design standards. Today, 17 of the on-street public parking spaces on Main Street do not meet current design standards, as they are striped too close to crosswalks or striped too close to curb cuts (driveways, business entrances, intersecting streets, etc).
- In addition to maintaining the 108 of current 110 spaces, additional off-street parking space will be available as a result of the 2019 ATM articles to develop two downtown parking areas. Annual Town Meeting in May 2019 approved the development additional 30-35 public parking spaces behind the two mansions across from Town Hall, as well as purchased another additional property on Clafin Street downtown for Town Hall parking.
- To preserve as many on-street parking spaces as possible, the project design did not add lanes on Main Street at the 85/135 intersection, preserving parking spaces that local businesses expressed was important.

Why does the project include bicycle lanes?

- The project includes bicycle lanes in order to separate bicycle traffic from vehicle traffic flow, improving safety. Today, bicycles share narrow road space with moving and parked vehicles.
- From a funding perspective, bicycle lanes are an integral part of the project. Bicycle accommodations are required to be included in the Project as a condition of the \$8.3M State/Federal Funding. Bike accommodations will include proper safety features and signage.

Will the bicycle lanes be in the road or separated / how will the bike lanes work?

- The bicycle lanes will be separated from the roadway by a vertical curb and separated from the sidewalk by a beveled curb. For the majority of the project the separation varies from 2-feet to 8-feet. Pedestrians will use the sidewalk, bicycles will use the separated path, and vehicles will use the travel lanes. Bicycles navigating through the Route 85/135 signalized intersection will have their own bicycle signal phase that will operate separately from the pedestrian crossing phase and the vehicle phases. Prior design options considered single direction bike paths on either side of the road; current design addresses feedback from abutters (over property and parking concerns with those designs), requiring 4 feet less of road-width to accommodate.

How does the Upper Charles Trail fit into this?

- The separated two-way bicycle lane provides an important extension for recreational users of the Center Trail through the downtown and then toward Hopkinton State Park and Ashland. It is part of the regional Upper Charles Trail, connecting Sherborn, Holliston, Milford, Hopkinton, Ashland and Framingham. Milford and Holliston have completed their portions. This project will close the gap in Upper Charles trail between the Center Trail (future Upper Charles Trail) and the easterly portion of the Upper Charles Trail, preliminarily designed to extend eastward behind the former Center School.

Is the Town taking privately-owned land?

- No, the town is not taking private property. The vast majority of project work is within road right-of-way. The town owned right of way is wider than many realize. Still, some work will require easements on private property. Many properties requiring a specific easement for the project are already subject to easements today. 60% of the easements are temporary, 40% are permanent - of the permanent easements, nearly half are utility easements.
- As this project has progressed through its various design stages, public forums and outreach has occurred, during which the total area, duration and scope of required easements have been progressively reduced. While it is typically not possible for a roadway project of this magnitude to proceed without acquiring a certain number of easements, the active participation of property owners in these public forums has contributed greatly to the minimization of the easement acquisitions that are currently proposed.
- Property owners will be compensated for easements required for the project. All easements will be professionally appraised, and the owners will be compensated pursuant to law.

What are easements, and how do they apply to this project?

- An easement is a non-possessory and non-ownership right to use another property for a specific use. Easements offer a right to access either temporarily or permanently and are used throughout Hopkinton and the rest of Massachusetts and the nation today. An example is a utility easement, to allow the utility company to bury or hang wires required to deliver service and allow workers to stand on the property to perform work.
- Most of the project work is within road right-of-way. Some work will require easements on private property. Many properties requiring a specific easement for the project are already subject to easements today. 60% of the easements are temporary, 40% are permanent - of the permanent easements, nearly half are utility easements.
- **Temporary easements** refer to rights to access during the project execution, while project work is being completed in front of a private property. Temporary easements last for the duration of project construction and extend further to provide additional time to review or fix any issues that may unexpectedly arise after completion; specifically, the temporary easements extend 5 years from the date of recording.
 - Approximately 87 of the project's easements are temporary easements (60%).
 - Of the 87 temporary easements, 25 relate to underground utility service relocation.
- **Permanent easements** may be required in certain areas of the project where public access (including utility lines) will be required after the Project is completed. Permanent easements exist extensively today in Hopkinton and other municipalities; for example, for most homeowners, the final several feet of front yard space closest to the curb is a permanent easement by the town. The property under the permanent easement is still private property.
 - Approximately 58 of the project's easements are permanent easements (40%).
 - **Of these, nearly half (28 of the 58) are permanent utility easements:**
 - 85% of the permanent utility easements are for overhead wire and/or guy wire.
 - 11% of the permanent utility easements are for guy wire and utility pole
 - 4% of the permanent utility easements are for underground service/vault/transformer at the Hopkinton Fire Department

Permanent Utility Easements (PUE)	# of PUE easements	Percent of 28 PUE's	Percent of All 58 Permanent Easements
PUE (guy wire)	11	39%	19.0%
PUE (overhead wire)	9	32%	15.5%
PUE (guy wire and overhead wire)	4	14%	6.9%
PUE (guy wire & utility pole)	3	11%	5.2%
PUE (underground service/vault/transformer)	1	4%	1.7%
Total Permanent Utility Easements (PUE)	28	100%	48.3%

- ***Of the remaining 30 permanent easements, nearly 2/3 relate to only 5 specific properties (impacted by 19 easements).*** The remaining 11 of the 30 non utility permanent easements each apply to 11 different properties (1 each). 25 of 30 non utility related permanent easements apply in some way to sidewalks.

Non-Utility Permanent Easements	# of Permanent Easements	Percent of 30 non-PUE Permanent Easements	Percent of All 58 Permanent Easements
Sidewalk	7	23%	12.07%
Sidewalk/WC Ramp	4	13%	6.90%
Sidewalk/Retaining Wall	3	10%	5.17%
Sidewalk/Benches/Trash Receptacles/UG service	3	10%	5.17%
Mast Arm Foundation (traffic signal)/Sidewalk/WC Ramp	2	7%	3.45%
Mast Arm Foundation (traffic signal)	1	3%	1.72%
Traffic Loop detector	1	3%	1.72%
Sidewalk/Sign	1	3%	1.72%
Shared Use Path/WC Ramp/Curbing	1	3%	1.72%
Sidewalk/WC Ramp/Curb/Grd Rail	1	3%	1.72%
Guard Rail	1	3%	1.72%
Sidewalk/Curbing/Flashing Beacon/Hydrant	1	3%	1.72%
Sidewalk/Flashing Beacon/WC Ramp	1	3%	1.72%
Sidewalk/Rdway/Grd Rail/ Ret Wall	1	3%	1.72%
Bike Accomod/Curb/Sidewalk	1	3%	1.72%
Sidewalk/Curbing/Retaining Wall	1	3%	1.72%
Total Permanent Easements	30	100%	51.7%

Will access to driveways be impacted?

- Access to driveways will be maintained during construction, however, there could be some delays and disruption that will be coordinated with property owners when rebuilding driveway aprons to residences and businesses.

How will the project affect the Town Common?

- While technically the green space of the Common is not affected by this project, there are some safety driven modifications to Marathon Way that will alter the appearance on the north side of the Common. Marathon Way will become one-way eastbound and will be augmented to use its full roadway right-of-way, a portion of which today is currently the grass area between the low rock wall (on the far north edge of the Common) and Marathon Way's southern curb.
- New green space will be added around the Dough Boy statue extending westward along the length of Marathon Way, creating a green space buffer on the north side of Marathon Way. This is to achieve a separation of Marathon Way and the Common from busy Main Street traffic, serving as a safety buffer for people using Marathon Way and the Common. Today, there is no physical distinction in the roadways of Marathon Way and Main Street - the two roads share a single extended paved area. This creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians using the Common and Marathon Way as well as for vehicles moving along Marathon Way in both directions, with westbound Marathon Way traffic criss-crossing eastbound Main Street traffic.
- Essentially, Marathon Way will be shifted southward, closer to the Common, and green space currently on its south side will be replicated instead on its north side, in order to create a safety buffer from busy Main Street.

How will stone walls be impacted?

- No stone walls will be lost. Some existing walls would be moved in accordance with special historic preservation specifications. Stone wall relocation within the Historic District has been approved by the Historic District Commission.

Has the Town informed property owners in the project area about this project?

- The 2018 Annual Town Meeting warrant was posted as required by local and state law and was available online in advance of Town Meeting. Proposed Annual Town Meeting motions were also available in advance of Town Meeting. The warrant included the article in question (#47) along with all the parcel numbers.
- In addition to formal notifications and postings, general public awareness of this project has been high over the past several decades, for those following town government and local news. The need for upgrades to the Main Street corridor has been central topic of many public meetings over this period.
- Most of the property owners included in what would eventually become the project area were sent letters in November 2012 notifying them that temporary and/or permanent easements would be proposed on their property.
- Since then, Town representatives have had countless conversations with property owners about the details of the project's potential impacts, and the need for temporary and permanent easements. In many cases, those conversation led to project refinements that minimized or even eliminated the need for easements
- As the project has progressed through its various design stages, the total area, duration and scope of required easements have been progressively reduced. While it is typically not possible for a roadway project of this magnitude to proceed without acquiring a certain number of easements, the active participation of property owners in these public forums has contributed greatly to the minimization of the easement acquisitions that are currently proposed.

Has this project been before Town Meeting in the past?

Yes, the project has been before Town Meeting on the following occasions:

- May 2010, Art. 18 - Downtown design for traffic
- May 2012, Art. 39 - UG Utility Special Law; Art. 56 - Purchase 2 West Main
- May 2013, Art. 62 - TH Parking Lot (expand parking)
- May 2018, Art. 20 - Project Funding \$3.4M; Art. 47 - Easements
- May 2019, Art. 51 - Easements

The following forums and hearings were also held:

- January 9, 2018 MassDOT public hearing
- September 27, 2017 public forum

Civic engagement has been a cornerstone of the town's approach to this project. In all, Main Street corridor planning has been the topic of over 90 public meetings held between 2003 and today.