

TOWN OF HINGHAM

OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD



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February 11, 2025

Ms. Tegin Teich
Executive Director, Boston Region
Metropolitan Planning Organization
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116
(via email: tteich@ctps.org)

Subject: 605168– Hingham- Improvements on Route 3A Project for FFY 26-30 TIP Development

Attention: Ethan Lapointe, Program Manager, TIP

Dear Ms. Teich:

On behalf of the Town of Hingham, and as authorized by the Hingham Select Board, I am contacting you in response to Mr. Lapointe's email dated February 7, 2025, to Hingham's Town Engineer, J R Frey, regarding project readiness of the Route 3A Improvements Project. I am also providing you with a project status update and suggested solutions to advance this project and maintain the project's position in the FFY 26 TIP. As mentioned in your email, the submission of the 100% Design submission has been delayed by requests from MassDOT's District Five Office to include additional work that is outside of the original scope of the project. Included in this additional work are requirements (1) for the Town of Hingham to replace a 12-inch water main for the length of the project; (2) for National Grid (NGRID) to replace their gas utility lines for significant lengths of the project; and (3) for deferred maintenance of the MassDOT's drainage system and discharges to be addressed before the design would be allowed to advance. These issues, requested at such a late stage of the design process, have delayed and impeded the project's advancement.

Customarily there are three issues that drive a project's advertised schedule. They include utilities, environmental permitting, and right-of-way issues. The Town of Hingham made these issues its primary focus and took proactive measures to assure that this project would move forward on schedule. The Town worked closely with NGRID to perform as much work as possible prior to the advertisement of the project. Below we discuss a solution to address MassDOT's most recent request for additional NGRID gas line replacement. Regarding environmental permitting, the Town has met informally with the Hingham Conservation Commission, which supports the project and is ready to review the environmental permits once submitted. Regarding the Right-of-Way process, the Town of Hingham's counsel met with MassDOT's ROW Bureau and its counsel and has discussed the process and offered assistance in providing

research, if needed, on the affected properties which may require Article 97 approval. The Town of Hingham, through the respective Boards or Committees which control the properties subject to Article 97 approval, is prepared to issue easements or licenses, as applicable, to expedite the requirements of MassDOT and FHWA.

The Town offers the following solutions to address the issues impeding the schedule for this project:

Town of Hingham Water Main – The Town of Hingham is advancing the design and replacement of the Town’s water main to begin construction in the Spring/Summer of 2025, to be completed prior to the Spring of 2026. This will reduce the overall cost of MassDOT’s advertised project and allow the selected contractor to begin work sooner.

NGRID Gas Main – NGRID has already performed some work in preparation for the reconstruction of Route 3A, including relocation of a pressure regulating station which was within the 3A Rotary. In our discussions with NGRID they are prepared to replace additional sections of gas main consistent with the same schedule that governs the Town’s water main work. NGRID has applied for a State Highway Access Permit to perform the work, but the conditions set by MassDOT include full width reconstruction of the impacted roadway segments. Based on this condition, NGRID has chosen to wait until the larger project is constructed in order to avoid duplicative work and costs. Requiring NGRID to reconstruct the entire roadway width versus providing an appropriate patch would only result in wasted time and money as all of the roadway work they would perform would necessarily be reconstructed again when the larger project begins. Allowing NGRID to perform its work in advance of the larger project would likewise reduce the total cost of MassDOT’s advertised project and allow the selected contractor to begin work sooner.

MassDOT Drainage System Maintenance – The drainage discharge improvements requested by MassDOT at the 75 percent submission are a result of deferred maintenance of MassDOT’s roadway drainage system. We understand that there has been considerable time and effort spent investigating these issues due to a lack of plans and the need to locate the drainage discharge points. While we understand the importance of these improvements, we recommend that this work be advanced as a separate drainage improvement project that could be advertised prior to the larger project so as not to interfere with nor delay the larger project. MassDOT’s project consultant has sufficient information to prepare the design for these improvements and advertise a separate project, again reducing the total cost of the larger MassDOT project.

MassDOT Submission Review Periods – The Town of Hingham requests that MassDOT accept the submission of the 100 percent design plans as soon as possible, which would facilitate initiation of the environmental permitting and required right-of-way process. The Town also requests that MassDOT maintain a 30-day review period for all significant submissions and an accelerated schedule for coordination and resolution of issues.

MassDOT Right-of Way Process – As noted above, the Town of Hingham has been and continues to be proactive in assisting MassDOT in the right-of-way process. The Town is prepared to assist in any way possible and is working directly with MassDOT’s ROW Bureau to remove any perceived barriers in the process and to advance the required approvals as quickly as possible. The Town is preparing warrant article language that would provide the Select Board with the necessary authority to approve and finalize the associated real estate transactions supporting the project.

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In closing, we request consideration of the above solutions to keep this process on track and to keep the subject project within the FFY 26 TIP as currently scheduled. Thank you for your consideration. This project is a priority for the Town and we are available to meet and discuss all aspects of the project.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph M. Fisher, Chair
Town of Hingham Select Board

cc: Mr. Jonathan Gulliver - MassDOT Highway Administrator
Senator Patrick O'Connor
Representative Joan Meschino