



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2524

MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

STEPHEN R. PRITCHARD
SECRETARY

Tel. (617) 626-1000
Fax. (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

February 10, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ON THE NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

PROJECT NAME: River's Edge (formerly TeleCom City)
PROJECT LOCATION: Medford, Malden and Everett
PROJECT WATERSHED: Boston Harbor (Mystic)
EOEA NUMBER: 11818
PROJECT PROPONENT: Mystic Valley Development Commission (MVDC) and
Preotle, Lane & Associates, Inc.
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: January 11, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M.G.L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I have reviewed the Notice of Project Change (NPC) submitted on this project and hereby determine that it **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As originally proposed by the Mystic Valley Development Commission (MVDC) in 1996, the goal of the River's Edge project (formerly TeleCom City) was to convert a 207-acre industrial site with a significant contamination history into a modern telecommunications center. As proposed in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), Phase I of the project included land acquisition; demolition of non-historic structures; environmental remediation of the project area; development of up to 300,000 square feet (sf) of office/research and development space; roadways and other transportation facilities; construction of portions of the Malden River Park; and stormwater management improvements. Phase II of the project is located on the east side of the Malden River, on 52 acres opposite the Phase I area. At this site, six new buildings would accommodate approximately 600,000 sf of office/research and development space. On February

22, 1999 a Certificate was issued on the ENF stating that the project required the preparation of an EIR. A separate Certificate also issued on the same date required the preparation of a Phase I EIR and Area-Wide Permitting Strategy Report and a Draft and Final Area-Wide EIR.

A NPC was filed in October of 2000 to increase the amount of office/research and development space in Phase I to 441,600 sf, and to locate Phase I on contiguous parcels in Medford, close to the existing Wellington Business Center. The Phase I EIR was submitted to MEPA in December of 2000, and in March of 2001 the Secretary of Environmental Affairs issued a Certificate stating that the EIR adequately and properly complied with MEPA, but required the proponent to prepare a Response to Comments document and draft Section 61 Findings. The Response to Comments document was submitted in February 2003. A second NPC was filed in December 2004 requesting the inclusion of the Tufts University Boathouse within the Phase I project locus. In February of 2005, the Secretary's Certificate on the NPC concluded that no further review was required in conjunction with the addition of the Boathouse to the project site.

Jurisdiction

The entire project required a Mandatory EIR pursuant to Section 11.03(1)(a)(1) of the MEPA regulations because it involved the direct alteration of more than 50 acres of land; Section 11.03(3)(a)(5) because it will require a Chapter 91 license for non-water dependent use of one acre or more of waterways or tidelands; and Section 11.03(6)(a)(6) because the project will generate more than 3,000 new vehicle trips per day. The project requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; a Chapter 91 Waterways License, 401 Water Quality Certification and a Sewer Connection/Extension Permit from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); approval from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), formerly the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), for changes to traffic signals at Wellington Circle; and compliance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP).

The proponent - the Mystic Valley Development Commission - was formed by the cities of Medford, Malden and Everett, in conjunction with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Because project is being undertaken by a state agency, and will receive significant funding from the Commonwealth, MEPA jurisdiction extends to all aspects of the project with the potential to cause Damage to the Environment.

Description of Project Change

The proposed project change consists of the addition of 200 residential units and an amenities building to the Phase I portion of the project. The residential units are proposed on the Building I site, previously reviewed by MEPA as an office building. The residential units and amenities building will be located outside of wetlands and Chapter 91 jurisdiction. The residential units are proposed in addition to the 441,600 sf of new office/research and development space that was previously reviewed. The office space that was displaced by the conversion of Building I to residential use will be recuperated by adding four additional stories to the remaining three office buildings proposed in Phase I of the River's Edge Project.

In addition, four parking garages are proposed in the location of the surface parking lots and parking deck that were originally proposed on the west side of the site adjacent to Corporation Way. The southern parking garage (G1) will contain 300 spaces and will serve the proposed apartment building. The two central parking garages and the northern garage (G2, G3 and G4) will service the proposed office development and contain 351, 525 and 290 parking spaces respectively. An additional 216 surface parking spaces are proposed throughout the site to service the development. A total of 296 new parking spaces will be created as a result of the project proposed in the NPC, for a total of 1,672 parking spaces at the site.

The addition of 200 units of residential apartments and an amenities building will increase the gross square footage of buildings on site by approximately 222,000 square feet. However the footprint of the proposed residential building is slightly smaller than the previously proposed office space, and the amenities building is located in an area previously proposed as a parking lot, so the project change will result in a slight decrease (2,600 sf) in the amount of impervious surface on site.

Wetlands/Waterways

The proposed project change will not increase impacts to federal or state wetland resource areas. The proponent has received permits from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and a Water Quality Certificate from DEP for wetland impacts and mitigation. The proponent should note comments submitted by DEP on the NPC with regard to the hydrology of the wetland replication system.

On December 20, 2005 the proponent received a determination pursuant to M.G.L. c.91 from DEP indicating that a Waterways License would be issued for Phase I of the River's Edge project. In its comments on the NPC, DEP states that the structures within the jurisdiction of the Ch. 91 License, Building 2 and Parking Garage 2, are consistent with the Written Determination. The changes to Building 1, the new amenities building and the proposed 2 new parking garages are not located on filled tidelands. Therefore, additional review is not warranted for Ch. 91 purposes.

Wastewater/Drinking Water

The addition of the residential units and the amenities building will require an additional 26,092 gallons per day (gpd) of drinking water, bringing the total water demand for the Phase I site to 62,392 gpd. The project site is serviced by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) distribution system. The proponent has performed flow tests on the water main within the project boundary, and has determined that there is sufficient capacity within the system to serve the project's needs.

With the addition of the residential units and the amenities area, wastewater generated on-site will increase by approximately 23,520 gpd to 56,720 gpd. Wastewater from the project will be conveyed via the City of Medford's municipal system to the MWRA's Deer Island Treatment Plant in Winthrop, which has ample capacity to service the River's Edge project. The

NPC states that infiltration and inflow (I/I) mitigation will be required as part of the project, and that the proponent is currently working with the City of Medford to identify additional opportunities to eliminate (I/I) within the City's wastewater system. Projects within the MWRA regional wastewater system are typically required to provide I/I removal at a rate of 4:1. I encourage the proponent to communicate with DEP, based on their comments on the NPC, with regard to the rate of I/I removal that will be implemented.

Transportation

Traffic associated with the residential component of the River's Edge project was estimated using Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) trip generation numbers and assumed a transit mode share of 25 percent. The proponent states that use of the 25 percent mode share is justified because of the site's proximity to an existing MBTA transit station (Wellington Station), because the project will be a mixed-use development, and because the proponent has committed to fund a shuttle bus between the site and the Wellington MBTA station. The 200 units of residential apartments are expected to generate approximately 1,010 new daily vehicle trips; this estimate reflects the 25 percent reduction for transit.

Traffic volumes in the project area were determined by traffic counts performed in August, 2003. As part of the current NPC submission, the proponent conducted a peak hour capacity analysis for the same intersections that were evaluated in the TeleCom City Phase I EIR to determine the impacts of the 200 residential units on the local roadway network. The results of the analysis indicated that vehicular delay at study intersections would increase by 1 to 7 seconds, and that volume-to-capacity ratios would increase by 0.01 to 0.06. The proponent concludes that the addition of 200 units of housing at the River's Edge site will not have a significant effect on the local roadway network, in part because of the project's proximity to public transportation.

As originally proposed, the project involved a roadway known as TeleCom Boulevard, which was intended to provide connectivity between the phases of development and to improve traffic circulation in the area. As envisioned in the River's Edge overall development plan, TeleCom Boulevard is a new bridge and roadway that would connect the Phase I project area to future phases of the River's Edge project on the eastern side of the Malden River. As originally proposed, TeleCom Boulevard connects to Corporation Way via a large radius curve that cuts through the southwest corner of the Phase I Project boundary, thereby significantly reducing the land area of the development site. To facilitate the inclusion of a residential component in the Phase I site, the alignment of TeleCom Boulevard needs to be modified.

The NPC proposes the realignment of the western terminus of TeleCom Boulevard in Medford so that it would intersect Corporation Way to form a "T-type" intersection that would be controlled by a traffic signal. In addition, a traffic signal is proposed at the Cooper Street access to the River's Edge Phase I site, and this intersection would become the primary access point for Phase I of the project. The NPC also proposes to reconstruct Corporation Way between TeleCom Boulevard and Cooper street to provide two 11.5-foot travel lanes in each direction; an approximately four to five foot median; and three foot shoulders to accommodate bicycles. Currently, Corporation Way consists of one 11.5-foot travel lane in each direction; an 11.5-foot

center median bounded by two 4.1-foot shoulders; and 8.2-foot shoulders on each side to accommodate bicycles.

Several commenters have raised concerns about the impact of the proposed changes to Corporation Way on bicycle and pedestrian access. The 8.2-foot shoulders that are currently used by cyclists would be reduced to 3 feet. The conceptual Phase I site design in the NPC does not show any sidewalks along Corporation Way or any sidewalks leading to Corporation Way. Corporation Way will be an important pedestrian access route to Wellington Station. The proponent should note comments from Walk Boston with regard to the pedestrian infrastructure at the project site. The NPC states that at this point, the design of TeleCom Boulevard is still at the conceptual stage (pre-25 percent), and that it is an opportune time to consider alignment alternatives for the proposed roadway.

There is no state permit required for access to Corporation Way or for the construction of TeleCom Boulevard. A letter from MHD is included in the NPC, stating that Corporation Way is owned by the City of Medford, and as such the decision to alter the alignment or allow curb cuts along the roadway is a local issue. However, Mass Highway and the MVDC have been responsible for the design of TeleCom Boulevard, and Phase I of the River's Edge project will be developed with significant financial support from the state. Additionally, given the proponent's assertion in the NPC that 25 percent of trips generated by the Phase I project will be accounted for by transportation modes other than a single occupancy vehicle, I strongly recommend that pedestrian and bicycle access be accommodated in the redesign of TeleCom Boulevard and Corporation Way. The proponent should coordinate with the City of Medford, MHD, and organizations like Walk Boston and Bike to the Sea, Inc. to develop a design that will safely accommodate pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic in the project area.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the information provided by the proponent and comments from relevant public agencies, I find that the potential impacts of this project change do not warrant preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and can be addressed through the state and local permitting processes. No further MEPA review is required at this time.

February 10, 2006

Date



Stephen R. Pritchard

Comments received:

1/25/2006	Walk Boston
1/31/2006	Department of Environmental Protection, Northeast Regional Office
1/31/2006	Department of Environmental Protection, Waterways Regulation Program
1/31/2006	Combined Properties, Inc.
2/1/2006	Stephen Winslow

2/6/2006 Mystic River Watershed Association
2/6/2006 Rizzo Associates, for the Proponent

SRP/BA/ba