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May 8, 2009

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME : Roadway Reconstruction of Pulaski Boulevard
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Bellingham
PROJECT WATERSHED : Blackstone
EEA NUMBER : 14397
PROJECT PROPONENTS : Massachusetts Highway Department/Town of Bellingham
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : April 8, 2009

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project entails a reconstruction and signal upgrade project on Pulaski Boulevard from Orchard Street to the Franklin town line, a distance of approximately 2.3 miles. The total project length, including major side street approaches, is 2.8 miles. The purpose of this project is to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety along the corridor, with a new traffic signal to be located at Center Street, geometric and alignment improvements, improved signage and delineation of vehicle travel ways and shoulders, the addition of standard sidewalks and curbing, and accessibility improvements such as wheelchair ramps and crosswalks in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities

Act. Additionally, a new stormwater management system is proposed in order to improve the water quality of stormwater runoff before it enters adjacent wetland resource areas.

Under existing conditions, Pulaski Boulevard has an inconsistent width ranging from 25 to 30 feet. The roadway has no shoulders and limited sidewalks, and trees and fire hydrants pose hazards to drivers. A culvert built in 1928 over the Peter's River is deteriorating and in need of replacement. The existing drainage system is undersized and not well-maintained. According to the ENF, the preferred alternative will improve vehicular and pedestrian safety while minimizing impacts to abutting properties, including the removal of trees. The project received a Design Exemption from MassHighway in order to decrease the proposed shoulder width and thereby provide a narrower 32-foot roadway cross-section, rather than the standard 40-foot cross-section. The Design Exemption was justified in order minimize wetland impacts, tree removal, and overall project cost. A total of 103 trees and 92 shrubs will be planted as part of the mitigation program for the project.

Jurisdiction and Permitting

The project is subject to review pursuant to Sections 11.03(3)(b)(1)(f), 11.03(6)(b)(1)(b), and 11.03(6)(b)(2)(b) of the MEPA regulations because it is being undertaken by a State agency and because it will result in the alteration of one-half or more acres of other wetlands, the widening of an existing roadway by four or more feet for one-half or more miles, and the cutting of five or more living public shade trees of 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height. The project requires an Order of Conditions from the Bellingham Conservation Commission (which was issued on September 24, 2008 and not appealed); a Section 106 review under the National Historic Preservation Act to be coordinated with the Massachusetts Historical Commission; a Massachusetts Programmatic General Permit from the Army Corps of Engineers (issued in June 23, 2008); and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The project will be undertaken by and financed in part by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway), a State Agency. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction for this project is broad and extends to all aspects of the project that are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause Damage to the Environment, as defined in the MEPA regulations.

Rare Species

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (DFW) has determined that a portion of this project is within *Priority* and *Estimated Habitat* as indicated in the *Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas (13th edition, 2008)*. Specifically, the portion of this project that intersects with the Peter's Brook is within or near the mapped habitat of the American Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra appendix*), which is state-listed as "Threatened." Based on its review of the project NHESP has stated that a "take" of the American Brook Lamprey can be avoided if the proposed replacement culvert maintains the same hydraulic conditions of Peter's River, and the water quality of Peter's River and Arnold's Brook is not impaired. Provided that these conditions are met during construction, NHESP has no further concerns regarding rare species.

Fishery resources within the vicinity of the proposed project include Peter's River and Arnold's Brook. Fisheries surveys of Peter's River have yielded 7 species: American brook lamprey (*Lampetra appendix*), native brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), redbfin pickerel (*Esox americanus*), tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedi*) and white sucker (*Catostomus commersoni*). Additionally, the river is annually stocked in the spring with brook trout, brown trout and/or rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). DFW's Fisheries Program recommends that Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion and sedimentation control be adhered to for all phases of construction in order to minimize potential impacts to fisheries resources. All in-stream work should be conducted during low flow periods. The proposed culvert replacement should meet the replacement recommendations found in the "Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards: Technical Guidelines, August 6, 2004." Additionally, if the project will alter the streambed, the existing grade should be maintained.

Wetlands and Stormwater Management

According to the ENF, the project will result in an increase of 1.98 acres of impervious surface area. The project will impact approximately 4,950 square feet (sf) of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVWs) in six locations, which will be mitigated with 5,728 sf of replication area. The project will also temporarily impact 582 cubic feet (cf) of Bordering Land Subject to Flooding, which will be mitigated with 2,204 cf of replacement area.

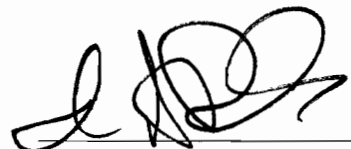
Currently, there are no adequate stormwater management controls for this area. According to the ENF, proposed stormwater BMPs include regular street sweeping, deep sump catch basins with hoods, sediment traps and detention basins in order to provide infiltration and total suspended solids removal. Additionally, silt fence with hay bales will be installed in specific locations to control sediments within the construction area limits.

Conclusion

Based on the information presented in the ENF, and after consultation with the relevant state agencies, I find that no further MEPA review is required.

May 8, 2009

Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

04/22/2009 Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)
04/28/2009 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Central Regional Office (CERO)

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