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July 21, 2006

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

PROJECT NAME: Main Street Roadway Improvements Project
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Reading
PROJECT WATERSHED: Ipswich
EOEA NUMBER: 13824
PROJECT PROPONENT: Massachusetts Highway Department
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: June 21, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) 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).

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), MassHighway, in cooperation with the Town of Reading, is proposing geometric improvements to existing intersections, the installation of traffic signals and roadway reconstruction, and minor widening along Main Street (Route 28) from Washington Street to Salem Street. Main Street is an Urban Arterial that serves as a local connection between Route 93 and Route 128, and is the primary road within Reading's downtown business district. Average daily trips account for approximately 18,550 vehicles per day on Main Street.

The project is undergoing review pursuant to Section 11.03(6)(b)(2)(b) of the MEPA Regulations because the project will result in the removal of more than 5 public shade trees measuring fourteen or more inches in diameter breast height (dbh). Because the project proponent is a State Agency and the project involves the acquisition of Financial Assistance, MEPA jurisdiction is broad and extends to all aspects of the project that may cause significant damage to the environment. The project will require a Federal Highway Administration Categorical Exclusion Checklist and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit.

Proposed construction activities include roadway reconstruction and minor roadway widening along the project corridor. Curbing and pavement markings will be installed to delineate the roadway. Drainage structures will be replaced with new deep sump catch basins and connected to the existing closed stormwater system. As this is a reconstruction project, the proponent has strived to meet the DEP's Stormwater Management Guidelines to the extent practicable. The project will also consist of traffic signal upgrades and sidewalk and intersection improvements to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. We encourage the proponent to consider pedestrian signals that incorporate both visual and audible crossing cues. Public shade trees slated for removal will be replaced in accordance with Massachusetts Highway Department landscape restoration policies.

I applaud the Town of Reading and the Massachusetts Highway Department for working cooperatively in the advanced planning stages of this project to consider public input from downtown merchants, Town officials and committees, and citizens at large. Street furniture, redistributed parking and intersection improvements have been proposed in accordance with the recommendations of the Reading Historical Commission due to the project's proximity to the Reading Common Historical District.

Based on a review of the information provided by the proponent and after consultation with the relevant public agencies, I find that the potential impacts of this project do not warrant further MEPA review.

July 21, 2006

Date



Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary

Comments Received

7/10/2006 Bradley H. Jones, Jr., State Representative, Minority Leader

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SRP/HSJ/hsj