



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>

March 3, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
SINGLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

PROJECT NAME: Gateway Centre Redevelopment Project
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: New Bedford
PROJECT WATERSHED: Buzzards Bay
EOEA NUMBER: 13613
PROJECT PROPONENT: The Home Depot
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: January 25, 2006

As Secretary of Environmental Affairs, I hereby determine that the Single Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) submitted for this project **adequately and properly complies** with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and with its implementing regulations (301 CMR 11.00).

I am aware that there are unresolved issues between the City of New Bedford and the proponent regarding site access issues, the project's traffic impacts, and historic resources. While I find that the SEIR has adequately responded to the Scope issued in the Certificate on the EENF, I remind the proponent that should a redesign of the site access or a significant change to traffic mitigation or other aspects of the project result from local discussions, the proponent will be required to file a Notice of Project Change in accordance with Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations.

With regard to traffic mitigation and relocation of the ramp at the intersection of Route I-195 and Coggeshall Street, I am basing my review of the project's traffic impacts on consultation with the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD), who indicates that the proponent should not be required to move the ramp. While the mitigation being proposed by the proponent requires

some refinement during the permitting process, MHD has stated that it is adequate for the project. I encourage the proponent, the City and regional planning interests to continue to discuss the potential of the area, and appropriate modifications to the transportation infrastructure that will enhance the sustainability of this and future investments in the area.

Project Description

As described in the SEIR, the project proposes the development of an approximately 201,874 square foot (sf) retail center to be located along Coggeshall Street at its intersection with the Interstate 195 (I-195) westbound ramps in New Bedford. The site contains approximately 15.5 acres of currently vacant land and a number of vacant and occupied mill buildings. The proposed development entails the construction of a 104,886 sf Home Depot home improvement store, with a 27,988 sf enclosed garden center. The project is expected to be completed in two phases. Phase I of the redevelopment will entail construction of the proposed Home Depot store together with the required infrastructure to support the full build out of the site. Phase II of the project will entail construction of the remaining commercial buildings on the site. The project will also include the redevelopment of approximately half an acre of land along the Acushnet River for a landscaped pedestrian walkway and a waterfront park.

The project will include parking for 668 vehicles and is anticipated to generate 12,220 new daily vehicle trips per day. Primary access to the site is proposed via a signalized driveway at the Interstate 195 westbound ramps and Coggeshall Street. As part of the project, the existing unsignalized highway on/off ramp will be upgraded to provide a signalized gateway from the I-195 corridor, representing an enhancement over existing traffic operations. Secondary access and egress for the plaza is proposed via a right-turn in/right-turn out only driveway onto Coggeshall Street west of the signalized driveway.

MEPA History

In accordance with Section 11.05(7) of the MEPA regulations, the proponent submitted an Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) for the project with a request that I allow the proponent to fulfill its EIR obligations under MEPA with a Single EIR, rather than require the usual two-step Draft and Final EIR process. The Expanded ENF received an extended public comment period pursuant to Section 11.06(1) of the MEPA regulations. In a Certificate issued on September 30, 2005, I found that the Expanded EENF met the regulatory standards at Section 11.06(8) of the MEPA regulations, and allowed the preparation of a Single EIR in fulfillment of the requirements of Section 11.03 of the MEPA regulations.

Jurisdiction and Permitting Requirements

The project is undergoing MEPA review and required the preparation of an EIR pursuant to Section 11.03(3)(b)(1)(e), 11.03 (3)(b)(5), 11.03 (6)(a)(6) and 11.03(10)(b)(1) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in new fill in a regulatory floodway; it may involve a new unlicensed non-water dependent use of tidelands in accordance with the Chapter 91 Waterways Program; it will generate more than 3,000 new vehicles trips per day from a single location; and

because it proposes the demolition of a historic structure listed in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth.

The project requires an Access Permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD); a Chapter 91 License from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC); Federal Consistency Review by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM); an Order of Conditions from the New Bedford Conservation Commission; Site Plan Review from the New Bedford Planning Board; and a Sign Variance from the New Bedford Zoning Board of Appeals.

Because the proponent did not seek financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the project, MEPA jurisdiction extends to those aspects of the project that may cause significant Damage to the Environment and that are within the subject matter of required or potentially required state permits. In this case, MEPA jurisdiction extended to issues related to transportation, air quality, wetlands, stormwater, waterways and historic resources. This Certificate provides a review of the SEIR and discusses those issues that must be addressed during permitting of the project.

Alternatives Analysis

The SEIR considered three alternatives for the proposed project: 1) No-Build condition, 2) Preferred Build condition and 3) Alternate Build condition, and, in response to the MEPA scope, conducted a more intensive alternatives analysis with regard to the reuse of historic buildings on site and the location of the proposed garden center. The No-Build alternative would leave the existing buildings on site, in their current condition of varying stages of demolition and disrepair, including areas of extensive environmental contamination. The Preferred Build condition includes the demolition and removal of the existing buildings on-site, cleanup of all environmental contamination and the redevelopment of the site with the proposed retail development, including the riverfront park and pedestrian walkway project.

In the Alternate Build condition, the proponent considered the feasibility of reusing existing buildings on-site, with special consideration for Mill Building No. 4, part of the former Columbia Spinning Company. The EENF states that due to the requirements for environmental remediation of soils underneath building foundations, asbestos removal, building loads required for the proposed uses and required traffic improvements, that the reuse of existing buildings was determined not to be feasible. The Certificate on the EENF required that the proponent revisit the potential of incorporating the reuse of existing buildings on site into the project.

In response to the requirement to consider additional alternatives that would preserve Mill No. 4, the proponent contracted with GLC Development Resources LLC, a firm that specializes in the redevelopment of historical industrial mill properties, to explore the feasibility of reusing Mill No. 4 in conjunction with the proposed redevelopment plan for the site. GLC also considered an alternative plan for the site proposed by the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE), which also called for the preservation of Mill Building No. 4. GLC examined alternative development schemes that would permit the preservation of Mill Building No. 4 and

undertook preliminary pro forma analysis for reusing Mill No. 4 based on the following five redevelopment schemes:

- Repositioning as a 100% commercial building;
- Conversion to market rate residential;
- Conversion to affordable residential;
- Mixed-use redevelopment with three floors of residential over commercial; and
- Partial demolition with mixed-use redevelopment of the building's northern half.

GLC analyzed a variety of factors with direct impact on the viability of the project including the status of the New Bedford real estate market, the condition and structural features of Mill Building No. 4; the character of the Mill No. 4's current setting, and existing environmental contamination issues. The analysis concluded that none of the redevelopment scenarios tested would be feasible by any conventional marketplace measures of financial return. The proponent has proposed a number of mitigating measures that would allow the project to move forward with the demolition of Mill No. 4, while recognizing and celebrating the historic significance of the site.

The alternatives analysis in the SEIR also provided an analysis of alternate locations for the proposed garden center, in response to comments from the Coalition for Buzzards Bay with regard to impacts to wetlands and aquatic life from runoff and spills. The proponent considered locating the Garden Center on the west end of the Home Depot building but ruled out this alternative based on topographic survey information that revealed an existing underground culvert system under the proposed Home Depot. The presence of this culvert would require two foundation systems to support the Home Depot building, resulting in a differential settlement within the structure. I encourage the proponent to provide additional information on the location of the Garden Center and the underground culvert in response to the Coalition for Buzzards Bay's comments on the SEIR.

The proponent also considered locating the Garden Center on the east end of the building, as proposed in the EENF. The New Bedford Conservation Commission issued an Order of Conditions (OOC) to the proponent for a site plan that has the Garden Center located on the east side of the proposed building. Measures to address concerns of the Conservation Commission and the Coalition for Buzzard's Bay were addressed during the local wetlands permitting process.

Transportation

The EENF included a transportation analysis that identified existing traffic conditions within the study area, identified the impacts of traffic generated by the proposed development and evaluated project-related impacts with regard to capacity and roadway requirements. MHD has indicated in its comments on the SEIR that the submitted traffic study generally conformed to the EOEA/EOT Guidelines for EIR/EIS Traffic Impact Assessments. The Department however voiced a number of concerns that the proponent will need to address during the permitting process.

Since the filing of the EENF, the proponent has expanded the study area to include additional locations within the Town of Fairhaven, as well as a weave analysis for a portion of I-195. Capacity analyses were conducted for the study area intersections to quantify existing and future year operations with and without the project at weekday evening and Saturday midday peak hours. The capacity analyses indicate that with proposed mitigation measures in place, area infrastructure will be adequate to accommodate project-related traffic impacts, with the majority of the study area intersections operating at acceptable levels of service.

The capacity analyses undertaken by the proponent indicate that several study area intersections operate over capacity under existing conditions with the remaining intersections operating below capacity. Proposed measures aimed at mitigating the impacts associated with the proposed project and improving existing conditions will allow for the majority of study area intersections to operate at Level of Service (LOS) D or better during both peak periods under future build conditions. The SEIR proposes the following traffic mitigation:

- Coggeshall Street at the I-195 Westbound Ramps and Site Driveway: As part of the development program, a traffic signal is proposed at the intersection of Coggeshall Street at the I-195 westbound ramps and the proposed site driveway. In addition to installing a traffic signal at this location, roadway improvements will be constructed along Coggeshall Street and the I-195 westbound ramps. Specifically, the eastbound Coggeshall Street approach will be widened to accommodate an exclusive left turn lane, a through lane, and a channelized right turn lane. Similarly, the westbound Coggeshall Street approach will be modified to provide an exclusive left-turn lane onto the I-195 westbound ramps. The northbound I-195 westbound ramps approach will be modified to allow for an exclusive left turn lane, two through lanes, and a channelized right turn lane. The southbound site driveway will be designed to accommodate an exclusive left turn lane, a through lane, and a channelized right turn lane, with two receiving lanes for traffic separated by a median island. With the proposed mitigation in place, this intersection is projected to operate at LOS C during both the weekday evening and Saturday midday peak hours.
- Coggeshall Street at Belleville Avenue: The eastbound Coggeshall Street approach will be modified from two general purpose travel lanes to an exclusive left-turn lane and a shared through/right turn lane. The signal timing and phasing at this intersection will be modified to accommodate an exclusive left-turn lead phase for the eastbound Coggeshall Street approach, as well as green time reallocation to optimize signal operations. With the proposed mitigation in place, this location is projected to operate at LOS D or better during the weekday evening and Saturday midday peak hours.
- Howland Street at Main Street: The proponent is committed to implementing traffic signal modifications to optimize future traffic operations at this location. With these enhancements in place, future traffic operations at this location are projected to operate at LOS C during both the weekday evening and Saturday midday peak periods.
- Howland Street at Adams Street: The proponent is committed to implementing traffic signal modifications to optimize future traffic operations at this location. With these enhancements in place, future traffic operations at this location are projected to operate at LOS B during both the weekday evening and Saturday midday peak periods.

- Coggeshall Street Right-In/Right-Out Drive: To ensure that vehicular access and egress at the proposed site driveway does not impede mainline traffic flows on Coggeshall Street, the proposed driveway will be designed as a right-in/right-out only drive. The site access will be designed to MHD standards, including appropriate sight lines, tapers, vehicle turning radii, pavement markings, and STOP-signs with STOP bars at the driveway approached to Coggeshall Street.

With regard to the intersection of Coggeshall Street and the I-195 westbound ramp, MHD is concerned that the insufficient deceleration length along I-195 could have a negative impact on safety conditions for traffic traveling along the I-195 mainline. The proponent should demonstrate that the I-195 westbound deceleration lane at Coggeshall Street is adequate for the 2010 Build Condition; provide specific information such as length, width and taper of the deceleration lane; and analyze the operations of the on and off ramps. The deceleration lanes should be long enough to avoid any traffic back-ups on I-195 westbound and must operate at an acceptable LOS.

The proponent will also need to address concerns with regard to proposed geometry at the I-195 westbound off-ramp to Coggeshall Street. MHD has stated that there does not appear to be sufficient transitioning from the one-lane cross section to the four-lane cross section, nor does it appear that the channelized right-turn lane onto Coggeshall Street is sufficient since there is no acceleration lane provided on Coggeshall Street eastbound. The right-turn should operate as a free movement to reduce the likelihood of traffic impacts on I-195.

The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) has voiced concerns again in its comments on the SEIR about the configuration of the Coggeshall Street/I-195 westbound interchange and the ability of this intersection to accommodate increased traffic from the project. SRPEDD asserts that proposed improvements to the ramp do not address the safety problem of the off-ramp's curvature.

Following comments from MHD, the proponent should revise the proposed mitigation at the Howland Street/Main Street and Howland Street/Adams Street intersections in order to fully mitigate the impacts of project-related traffic at this location. The proponent states in the SEIR that intersection improvements at this location are currently under design by MHD, however MHD indicates in its comments that this project has not been designed and that it is unlikely that these improvements will be implemented prior to the completion of the Gateway Center project. Therefore, the proponent must work with MHD during permitting to develop additional mitigation to address deficiencies at this location.

The proponent should also note comments from SRPEDD regarding the intersection of Coggeshall Street at Belleville Avenue. Improvements proposed by the proponent to improve LOS at this intersection will result in the loss of on-street parking on Belleville Avenue. The proponent should work with the City to address the impacts of removing this parking supply. In its permitting discussions with MHD, the proponent should also consider the constrained layout of the Coggeshall Street/Belleville Avenue intersection that makes turning movements of large trucks extremely difficult. The proponent should also consider alternatives that would relocate

trips away from the Coggeshall Street/Belleville Avenue intersection, such as a rear entrance to the site or the reorientation of traffic flow west of the intersection.

The proponent should provide the EOT's Office of Transportation Planning and MHD's District 5 office with additional information to address concerns outlined in MHD's comment on the SEIR. A revised Letter of Commitment should be submitted with the supplemental information.

Air Quality

The SEIR contained a mesoscale analysis air quality analysis as required by DEP. The results of the analysis indicated that that the project build condition results in an increase in volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions when compared to the no-build condition. In their comments on the EENF, DEP stated that any increase in emissions must be mitigated. The proponent has committed to several mitigation measures, include Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management measures; enforcement of the state's anti-idling regulation; and several dust control measures. Following comments from DEP, I encourage the proponent to participate in DEP's Diesel Retrofit Program.

Transportation Demand Management

The proponent has committed to the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to reduce peak hour trip generation for the project:

- Transit Use Promotion: The project site is currently served by the Southeast Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) Bus New Bedford Route 2 -- New Bedford Terminal to Lund's Corner. The proponent will post transit schedules and fare information in a conspicuous location within the plaza in an effort to promote transit use by employees and customers of the site.
- Transit Subsidies: The proponent is committed to providing subsidies towards transit passes for employees of the center. Specifically, for the first three years following the opening of the center, the proponent will provide a 50 percent subsidy toward SRTA bus passes for employees of the center. This program will be limited to 50 employees on a first-come basis.
- Flex-time Work Schedules: The proponent will investigate the possibility of allowing flex-time work schedules for project employees to reduce vehicular traffic during peak commuter hours. It is noted in the SEIR that due to the retail nature of the project, employees of the plaza do not typically arrive or depart during typical commuter hours.
- Bicycle Storage: On-site bicycle storage will be provided for both employees and customers of the plaza.

Pedestrian Enhancements

As part of the project, the proponent is committed to constructing significant pedestrian

enhancements to the project site, including an approximately 865 foot long river walk along the eastern site frontage, adjacent to the Acushnet River. The proposed walkway will serve as an important connection between the project site, existing pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks along the Coggeshall Street corridor, and planned pedestrian amenities within the area. The walkway will provide direct connections between the project site and area transit service via dedicated pedestrian walkways and area sidewalks. The proponent has also committed in the SEIR to constructing an approximately ¼-acre urban riverfront park on-site that will be directly accessed via the riverwalk.

In addition, the proponent has committed to reconstructing existing sidewalks along Coggeshall Street and Mitchell Street, adjacent to the site. Reconstructed sidewalks will feature a three-foot wide brick-imprinted asphalt strip. Street lighting along both corridors will be provided via decorative lighting similar to that used in the downtown area. Along Coggeshall Street, existing overhead utilities will be relocated subsurface to enhance the pedestrian area.

Historic Resources

The project site includes the remaining buildings of the Bennett Manufacturing Corporation, which with its sister corporation, the Columbia Spinning Company, formed a complex that included at least 5 mill buildings and ancillary support buildings. The Bennett Manufacturing Historic Area is included in MHC's Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The project proposes the demolition of the remaining four Bennett Manufacturing Corporation buildings, including Mill No. 1, a two-story machine shop building, a small two-story support building, and a single story engine house building. The project also proposes the demolition of the remaining Columbia Spinning Company Mill building (Mill No. 4).

The proponent filed a Project Notification Form with MHC in accordance with 950 CMR 71.00. MHC has determined that the proposed project will have an "adverse effect" on the Mill No. 4 through the demolition of the historic property. It is also the opinion of MHC that Mill No. 4 meets the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its associations with the textile history of New Bedford and its links to the development of child labor laws. The Certificate on the EENF directed the proponent to consult with MHC and the public in order to consider the potential reuse of Mill Building No. 4 and to develop ways to eliminate, minimize or mitigate the adverse effect of the proposed project.

As discussed above in the review of the SEIR's alternatives analysis, the proponent considered several possible reuse scenarios for Mill No. 4, but concluded that saving the building is not a viable option. The proponent has submitted information to the MEPA office documenting its commitment to ongoing consultation with MHC and other interested parties to reach a consensus on the project alternatives and impacts to historic resources. In its comments on the SEIR, MHC also states that it will continue to consult with the proponent regarding the proposed project.

In the SEIR, the proponent stated its commitment to commemorating the Bennett

Manufacturing Corporation and Columbia Spinning Company and outlined mitigation for impacts to historic resources. Prior to the demolition of the remaining buildings, the proponent will undertake photographic documentation of the remaining Bennett Manufacturing Corporation Mill buildings and Mill No. 4. The proponent will provide MHC and the New Bedford Historical Commission with copies of the photographic documentation for their records. In addition the proponent will install a commemorative marker highlighting the role of the textile industry to the growth and prosperity of the City of New Bedford. The proponent also states in the SEIR that it is exploring the possibility of salvaging the building's stair tower, which is one of the building's most character-defining and visible features.

Proposed mitigation measures for impacts to historic resources will be the subject of on-going consultations with MHC in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 9, Section 26-27C, as amended by Chapter 254 of the Act of 1988 (950 CMR 71.00). Final mitigation measures will be formalized in a Memorandum of Agreement between the proponent, MHC and interested parties.

Wetlands and Stormwater

The project has received an Order of Conditions from the New Bedford Conservation Commission (SE 49-552) that has not been appealed. During the Conservation Commission's review of the project, resource areas at the project site were reflagged and determined to consist of 25-foot Riverfront Area, Coastal Bank and associated 100-foot Buffer Zone, and Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF). Impacts from the project will include 52,300 square feet of work within the Buffer Zone and approximately 6,500 cubic feet of fill in LSCSF. DEP has noted several potential plan revisions in the SEIR that may require the proponent to file for an Amended Order of Conditions.

According to the SEIR, the project has been designed to meet or exceed performance standards for redevelopment in DEP's Stormwater Management Policy. To avoid and minimize impacts to water quality, the project was designed to achieve a Total Suspended Solids (TSS) removal rate of 80% by utilizing street sweeping, catch basins with deep sumps, and Stormceptor units. Despite stormwater treatment measures proposed by the proponent, several commenters have outstanding concerns related to the discharge of stormwater to the Acushnet River.

The project site lies adjacent to mapped shellfish habitat which is protected under the MA Wetlands Protection Act (310 CMR 10.34). The MA Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has indicated that the area supports quahog (*Mercenaria mercenaria*), soft shelled clam (*Mya arenaria*) and oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) resources. These resources serve as an important source of seed shellfish to down stream locations and forage for species such as winter flounder (*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*). The river also has a significant river herring (*Alosa pseudoharendus*) run at its headwaters.

The SEIR responded to concerns about potential impacts to the Achushnet River by proposing the following measures:

- The portion of the Garden Center slab utilized for storage of fertilizer will be sloped away

from the Garden Center storm drains and into a separate closed collection system that will not discharge to the Achushnet River

- A shut off valve between the Garden Center catch basins and the rest of the storm drainage system to prevent accidental fertilizer spills in the Garden Center outside the fertilizer storage area from entering the Achushnet River
- A six cartridge StormFilter system would treat storm water runoff from the Garden Center to minimize the amount of fertilizer nutrients reaching the Acushnet River. The StormFilter system has been designed to the first flush requirement of one inch.

I appreciate the improvements that the proponent has made to address stormwater issues. I am also mindful that the New Bedford Conservation Commission has issued the Order of Conditions for the project, the primary permit for stormwater management. However, in response to comments from DEP and others, I encourage the proponent to continue its commitment to environmentally responsible design. The proponent should commit to developing a long-term plan to remediate and eliminate direct discharges of stormwater into critical shellfish areas in the Acushnet River.

Waterways

The SEIR provided a discussion of Chapter 91 jurisdiction over the proposed project and outlined how the proposal met the standards of Chapter 91 regulatory review. DEP has noted that the Waterways Program has not yet received an application for the project. The proponent should note comments from DEP in their comments on the SEIR regarding information required for the application package.

CZM has stated that some issues remain regarding the regulatory interpretation of the Waterways information presented in the SEIR. In response to CZM's comments on the EENF, the proponent provided additional information on the potential Ch. 91 jurisdiction on the site. Historic shoreline plans that pre-dated that initial Ch. 91 license for the site established the position of the Historic High Water Mark significantly landward to the position suggested in the EENF. CZM states that based on this revised jurisdiction line and the license history for the site, that DEP Waterways will require a new license for both the pedestrian walkway and the portion of the new retail building and exterior paved areas of the project within jurisdiction. It is likely that DEP will require this entire project to be licensed as a Non Water-Dependent Use under 310 CMR 9.12(2)(e). The proponent should note that CZM intends to participate in the Ch. 91 license proceedings for the proposed project in accordance with 310 CMR 9.13(2).

Solid and Hazardous Waste

The proponent should note comments from DEP's Solid Waste Management Program and Bureau of Waste Site Clean Up. Any demolition activity at the project site must comply with DEP's Solid Waste and Air Quality Control regulations.

Mitigation

The SEIR contained a separate chapter on all mitigation measures to which the proponent has committed and draft Section 61 Findings for state agencies, including a Letter of Commitment for use by MHD. A schedule for the implementation of mitigation was also included. The proponent committed to the following mitigation measures in the SEIR:

- The proponent will undertake photographic documentation of the Bennett Manufacturing Corporation and Columbia Spinning Co. buildings to be demolished and will provide MHC and the New Bedford Historical Commission with copies of the photographic documentation for their records.
- The proponent will provide a commemorative marker highlighting the role of the textile industry to the growth and prosperity of the City of New Bedford.
- The proponent will reconstruct the intersection of Coggeshall Street at the I-95 Westbound ramp and site driveway.
- The proponent will implement geographic enhancements and/or signal timing modifications and will monitor future traffic operations at the following intersections:
 - Coggeshall Street at Belleville Avenue
 - Howland Street and Main Street
 - Howland Street at Adams Street
- The proponent will implement Transportation Demand Management measures including transit use promotion, transit subsidies, flex-time work schedules and bicycle storage
- The proponent will provide pedestrian enhancements including an 865-foot long river walk; reconstructed sidewalks along Coggeshall Street and Mitchell Street; and improved street lighting along Coggeshall and Mitchell Street. Existing overhead utilities will be relocated subsurface.
- The redevelopment of the site will mitigate environmental concerns related to the presence of hazardous regulated materials at the site.
- The proponent will implement stormwater management measures including street sweeping, deep sump catch basins and Stormceptors.
- To ensure that fertilizer nutrients from the proposed garden center are not introduced to the Acushnet River, the proponent has committed to the following:
 - The portion of the Garden Center slab utilized for storage of fertilizer will be sloped away from Garden Center storm drains into a separate closed collection system that will not discharge into the river.
 - A shut off valve between the Garden Center catch basins and the rest of the storm drainage system to prevent accidental fertilizer spills in the Garden Center outside the fertilizer storage area from entering the river.
 - A six cartridge StormFilter system will treat storm runoff from the Garden Center to minimize the amount of nutrients reaching the river. Stormwater will be treated to one inch.

I remind the permitting agencies to forward copies of Section 61 Findings, once issued, to the MEPA Office for completion of the project files.

Conclusion

I find the SEIR to be adequate and am allowing the project to proceed to the state agencies for permitting. The SEIR contained adequate information on project alternatives, impacts, and mitigation, and provided the state permitting agencies with sufficient information to understand the environmental consequences of their permit decisions. No further MEPA review is required.

March 3, 2006
Date


Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary

Comments received:

2/8/2006	Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
2/8/2006	The Coalition for Buzzards Bay
2/16/2006	MA Office of Coastal Zone Management
2/22/2006	James Bobrick
2/22/2006	Charlton Dade
2/22/2006	Massachusetts Historical Commission
2/23/2006	Jason Fiering
2/23/2006	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District
2/24/2006	Anne Wolfe
2/24/2006	Department of Environmental Protection, Southeast Regional Office
2/24/2006	Epsilon Associates, Inc. on behalf of the Proponent
2/27/2006	The Coalition for Buzzards Bay
2/28/2006	Executive Office of Transportation

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