



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Deval L. Patrick
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian A. Bowles
SECRETARY

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

May 9, 2008

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

PROJECT NAME : The MathWorks Campus Phase IIc
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Natick
PROJECT WATERSHED : Concord
EOEA NUMBER : 14219
PROJECT PROPONENT : The MathWorks, Inc.
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : April 9, 2008

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).

The project consists of the demolition of a one-story, 15,310 square foot (sf) retail building, construction of a four-story, 170,000 sf office building in its place and construction of a five-level parking garage (four levels aboveground) with 859 parking spaces at the existing Mathworks campus located on Apple Hill Drive in Natick. The project will include changes to existing on-site circulation, roadway improvements and improvements to the existing stormwater system to improve water quality and control peak runoff rates.

The 35-acre site contains three, four-story office buildings totaling 452,690 sf, a one-story 15,310 sf retail building, 1,145 surface parking spaces and a three-level parking structure with 585 spaces (East Garage). A 5.68-acre open space parcel at the rear of the property was deeded to the Town of Natick when the original development was constructed (EEA #4405).

The project is undergoing MEPA review pursuant to Section 11.03 (6)(b)(14) because it requires a state permit and will generate more than 1,000 average daily vehicle trips (adt) and will construct more than 150 new parking spaces at a single location. The project requires an Access Permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway). In addition, the project requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for Stormwater Discharge from Construction Activities from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Because the project includes state funding in the form of a Massachusetts Opportunity and Relocation and Expansion (MORE) Job Capital Programs grant, MEPA has broad scope jurisdiction that extends to all aspects of the project that may cause Damage to the Environment.

Potential environmental impacts associated with the project are the generation of 1,380 average daily vehicle trips (adt) for a total of 5,540 adt, additional use of 10,690 gallons per day of water and generation of 10,690 gpd of wastewater. Efforts to avoid, minimize and mitigate project impacts include expansion of an existing site, a .96 acre reduction in impervious surfaces, construction of roadway improvements, implementation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to reduce vehicle trips, construction of structured parking to minimize impervious surfaces and land alteration and expansion and re-vegetation of existing buffer zones.

The ENF includes a transportation impact study that identifies existing conditions, estimates trip generation associated with the project, analyzes the project's impact on traffic and identifies mitigation measures. The ENF includes technical memoranda (Evaluation of a Signalized Route 9 Eastbound-to-Westbound U-Turn dated September 24, 2007 and Response to Final Peer Review Memorandum dated October 30, 2007) that further address and analyze issues and proposed mitigation including the proposed U-Turn. The study indicates that there is significant congestion in the study area during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods and that these conditions remain static or degrade in the 2011 No-Build and Build Conditions.

The ENF indicates that the project proponent will implement the following improvements at state highway locations to minimize project impacts:

- a new signalized median break (to reverse direction from Route 9 eastbound to Route 9 westbound (located approximately 1,300 feet west of the Route 9/Oak Street intersection);
- addition of and improvements to pavement markings and signage change at the Route 9/Route 27 interchange and the Route 9/Oak Street intersection, including relocation of the crosswalk on the Route 27 southbound to Route 9 eastbound ramp to improve sight lines; and
- replacement of the traffic signal controller, installation of emergency preemption and repair of broken vehicle loop detectors at the Route 9/Oak Street intersection.

Analysis of the effectiveness of the U-Turn indicates that it provides modest improvements to cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods, a reduction in the traffic making a U-turn at Oak Street and a reduction in traffic on some of the route 27 ramps compared to existing conditions. The ENF indicates that project mitigation will include traffic monitoring to assess actual traffic generation and effectiveness of the U-Turn. The ENF indicates that

planning and design of long-term improvements at the Route 9/Route 27 interchange and the Route 9/Oak Street intersection are necessary to address traffic congestion in this corridor. The long-term improvements will be funded through a \$1.3 million dollar MORE Job Capital Programs grant. The U-Turn may be removed if monitoring and analysis demonstrate that it is not effective as part of the long-term improvements.

The TDM Program includes membership in the Metrowest/495 Transportation Management Association (TMA), the designation of a transportation coordinator to implement the TDM Program and pedestrian and bicycle access improvements. The proponent will provide financial support for the Natick Neighborhood Reverse Commuter Bus, a Town-operated bus that travels between the train station and major employers. The proponent will construct a sidewalk along the project site's frontage on Route 9 to improve pedestrian access and it will provide secure bicycle storage. Local roadway improvements will include improvements to pavement markings and signage.

Comments from the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) indicate that the transportation impact study conforms to the Executive Office of Energy and the Environment (EEA)/EOTPW Guidelines for Traffic Impact Assessment. EOT notes that the project proponent has been consulting with MassHighway and the Town of Natick to discuss project impacts and identify mitigation measures. These discussions resulted in the identification of the interim mitigation measures described above that will be implemented by the proponent and efforts to advance long-term improvements which will be designed by the Town and constructed by MassHighway. EOT comments indicate that MassHighway is satisfied that the transportation issues associated with this project have been studied and mitigated adequately and indicate that no further MEPA review is required based on transportation issues.

Comment letters from the Walnut Hill Neighborhood Association and Natick residents identify significant concerns with the additional traffic this project will generate and question the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation. In addition, they identify concerns with the impact of the project on the residential neighborhood including visual impacts of the garage and associated noise. In particular, they highlight conditions at the Route 9/Oak Street intersection, indicate that project mitigation will not significantly improve conditions during the a.m. peak hour, and express concern with the effects of the U-Turn on the Wethersfield neighborhood. Commentors suggest that large scale development and increased density on Route 9 should be limited until capacity can be expanded on Route 9.

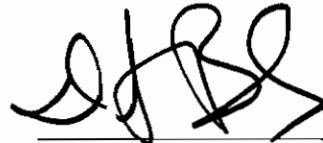
I am sympathetic with commentors concerns that this project will exacerbate existing conditions; however, I do not believe that additional MEPA review is warranted. The ENF provides an analysis of the impacts of the project and assesses the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation. It appears that the proponent, the Town of Natick and MassHighway are working closely together to minimize the impacts to state roadways and to neighborhoods to the extent feasible. The U-Turn is intended to minimize existing and future cut-through traffic within residential areas and minimize westbound traffic using Oak Street to reverse direction. In addition, MassHighway, the Town and the proponent have worked together to secure a MORE grant that will provide a more comprehensive solution to congestion in this area.

I expect that the proponent will aggressively implement its TDM Program to minimize vehicle trips to the extent possible and I strongly encourage MassHighway to require aggressive implementation as part of its permit requirements. In particular, the proponent should provide significant subsidies for transit to employees and encourage use of staggered and flexible work hours to minimize vehicle trips during the peak hour. The ENF did not include a parking analysis to justify the addition of 614 parking spaces. I encourage the proponent to consider how parking could be reduced further to provide the minimum supply necessary. The implementation of an aggressive TDM Program should minimize the demand for parking at the site. Finally, I expect MassHighway will consider the comments submitted on this project during its permitting process.

The review of the ENF has served to adequately disclose the potential impacts associated with this project. Based on the information in the ENF and after consultation with relevant public agencies, I find that no further MEPA review is required. The project may proceed to permitting.

May 9, 2008

Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments Received:

4/29/08	Executive Office of Transportation
5/5/08	Alan Blume, Walnut Hill Neighborhood Association
5/6/08	Tim Foulkes
5/7/08	Marijane N. Geary
5/5/08	Anthony A. Marini, Walnut Hill Neighborhood Association
5/6/08	Paula Shakespeare

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