



*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>

July 10, 2009

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

PROJECT NAME : Alewife Brook Greenway  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Arlington, Cambridge and Somerville  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Boston Harbor (Mystic)  
EEA NUMBER : 14431  
PROJECT PROPONENTS : Department of Conservation and Recreation  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : June 10, 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 greenway corridor improvements in a 15.74-acre area of the Alewife Brook Reservation, which is located downstream of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Alewife Station, from where the brook flows under Route 2 to its confluence with the Mystic River. As proposed, the project would restore severely degraded riverfront area and urban forest; improve recreational access through a series of new boardwalk and stabilized aggregate pathways, and restored and improved asphalt pathways; improve traffic and pedestrian safety features; and provide new wood and steel guardrails and signage. Additionally, the project will provide enlarged and restored wetlands and vegetated stormwater best management practices (BMPs), and a variety of other features

designed to encourage biodiversity and enhance the ecological and recreational values of the riparian corridor. For example, the project will include extensive invasive species removal, reforestation with native plants, and removal of several hundred feet of chain link fence. The project is expected to have positive effects on flood control and water quality of the Alewife Brook.

The preferred alternative presented in the ENF is designed to avoid wetland resources areas and existing trees to the greatest extent possible, as well as limit disturbance to abutting residential properties and neighborhoods. The project includes a western path that will be constructed of boardwalk and stabilized aggregate that will be located largely adjacent to the brook and is intended for passive recreational users such as walkers and birdwatchers. The eastern path, which parallels the Alewife Brook Parkway, and is paved with bituminous concrete will be rehabilitated and is intended for more active users such as bicyclists and in-line skaters. Overall, the project will significantly improve recreational access, including access for disabled users, while avoiding impacts to ecologically sensitive areas.

### Jurisdiction and Permitting

The project is subject to review pursuant to Sections 11.03(3)(b)(1)(f) 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, in this case Riverfront Area. The project requires and has been issued Orders of Conditions from the Arlington and Somerville Conservation Commissions, neither of which have been appealed. Review under the National Historic Preservation Act will be coordinated with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The project also requires an Order of Conditions from the Cambridge Conservation Commission, which is still pending.

The project will be undertaken and financed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), 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.

### Review of the ENF

#### *Wetlands and Stormwater Management*

According to the ENF, the project will alter 11,955 square feet (sf) of Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF) and 82,236 sf of Riverfront Area. It will also temporarily impact 1,280 linear feet of Bank for the removal of the chain link fence. In its comments, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) states that the compensatory flood storage for work proposed within the City of Cambridge does not appear to comply with the performance standards in the wetlands protection regulations. MassDEP has commented on this deficiency in the Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted to the Cambridge Conservation Commission. DCR should work with MassDEP and the Cambridge Conservation Commission to resolve this issue.

*Historic and Archeological Resources*

Because the project will be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway), it will be reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission in accordance with its Programmatic Agreement with FHWA and MassHighway. In its comments, MHC states that both the Alewife Brook Parkway and Mystic Valley Parkway are listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Accordingly, MHC requests that DCR conduct outreach to and seek comments from the historical commissions in Arlington, Cambridge and Somerville. Additionally, several archeological sites are recorded within and in the vicinity of the project area. Between 1890 and 1920, Alewife Brook was channelized and landscaped, with impacts occurring along both sides of the current location of the brook through filling and grading. Results of previous archeological surveys in portions of the project area have noted these impacts to archeological sites. MHC has requested further evaluation of the potential archeological sensitivity of specific project impact areas.

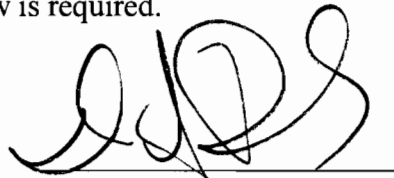
*Project Design and Construction*

I encourage DCR to note and consider the specific comments submitted by other commenters regarding the design and construction of this project.

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.

July 10, 2009  
Date

  
Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

- 6/29/09      Massachusetts Historical Commission
- 6/30/09      Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Northeast Regional Office
- 6/30/09      Alan Moore
- 7/6/09       WalkBoston (Late Comment)
- 7/8/09       City of Cambridge (late comment)

IAB/RAB/rab