



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>

August 24, 2007

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

PROJECT NAME : Retail Plaza Redevelopment
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Lowell
PROJECT WATERSHED : Merrimack
EOEA NUMBER : 14063
PROJECT PROPONENT : Target Corporation
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : July 25, 2007

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.

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project involves the demolition of an existing 92,000 square foot (sf) former Hannaford Brothers Supermarket building, and the construction of a new 138,000 sf Target retail building within an existing retail plaza located on a 22.9-acre parcel of property on Plain Street in Lowell. The project includes the construction of 53 additional surface parking spaces (1,064 spaces total), and supporting stormwater management infrastructure. Primary site access will be provided directly from Plain Street. The project will also maintain an existing secondary site drive from Payton Street. The western portion of the project site abuts wetland resource areas that are tributary to River Meadow Brook. The project's estimated potable water supply needs, and wastewater flows (approximately 30,580 gallons per day (gpd) and 27,800 gpd) respectively, will be served by the City of Lowell.



The project is subject to environmental review pursuant to 301 CMR 11.03 (6)(b)(13) of the MEPA regulations because the project will result in the generation of 2000 or more new vehicle trips per day (vtd) (2,556 total new daily trips) on roadways providing access to a single location. The project will require a 401 Water Quality Certification from MassDEP and an Order of Conditions from the Lowell Conservation Commission (and hence Superseding Order(s) from MassDEP if any local Orders were appealed). The project will also require an indirect access permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) for indirect access to the Lowell Connector. The project must comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for stormwater discharges from a construction site of over one acre from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The proponent should also consult with MassDEP regarding the recycling of demolition debris, and the proper management of asbestos, which may be encountered during the proponent's demolition activities.

The proponent is not seeking state funding or financial assistance for the proposed project. MEPA jurisdiction therefore is limited to those aspects of the project within the subject matter of any required or potentially required state permits that have the potential to produce significant damage to the environment (traffic, and water quality).

Traffic

Using the Institute of Traffic Engineers Trip Generation land use code 820 for Shopping Center, the project is estimated to generate a total of approximately 2,566 new vehicle trips on the average weekday. In their comments, MHD has requested that the proponent reexamine the project's trip distribution and traffic impacts on the study area intersections to include the vehicle trips and traffic impacts on Plain Street anticipated from the proposed Lowe's Home Improvement Store (EEA #13846). The proponent should also obtain detailed crash data for the Lowell Connector/Plain Street interchange from the Lowell Police Department to determine the need, if any, for traffic signalization at the Lowell Connector southbound ramps.

Parking and Site Layout

Parking at the site is proposed to include approximately a total of 1,064 on-site surface parking spaces (3.91 parking spaces per 1,000 sf retail space). According to the proponent, the number of proposed parking spaces is greater than the amount required under local zoning (2.0 parking spaces per 1,000 sf retail space). The proposed parking space plan is consistent with current industry standards and is necessary to support the proposed project.

The proponent has committed to install a fully-actuated traffic control signal at the Plain Street/Lowell Connector northbound on/off ramp, and to coordinate its timing with the existing traffic signal located at the site drive/Plain Street/VFW driveway intersections. The proponent has also committed to install signal conduit at the Plain Street/Lowell Connector southbound on/off ramps intersection to accommodate the future installation of a traffic control signal if warranted in the future.

Transportation Demand Management

The proponent has committed to implementing a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan for project employees, tenants and patrons to minimize potential project-related impacts to traffic. The proponent's proposed TDM plan incorporates a number of measures designed to reduce project generated new vehicle trips including:

- promoting employee and tenant use of Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) public transit system service (Routes #14, #16 and #17) by posting LRTA transit schedules in public spaces throughout the retail plaza, and distributing LRTA transit schedules to project employees, tenants and patrons;
- the implementation of an employee ride-sharing program; and,
- the development of employee direct deposit banking.

I encourage the proponent to consider expanding the proposed TDM plan to include additional measures to reduce project-generated vehicle trips including:

- the development of amenities including secured on-site bicycle storage racks within the project site to facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle movement to and within the project site;
- the construction of sidewalks, cross walks and signage along the south side of Plain Street to connect the project site to connect to the existing pedestrian transportation system located along Plain Street; and,
- the construction of clearly marked vehicle and pedestrian internal circulation patterns within the project site.

All retail plaza tenants and businesses should be required to participate in the proposed TDM plan. I note that the City of Lowell may require the proponent to commit to additional mitigation measures that may result from the City's development review process. The proponent should work closely with the MHD to satisfactorily address the issues of site access and traffic flow raised by MHD.

Stormwater\Drainage

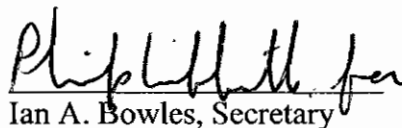
As described in the ENF submittal, no work is proposed within wetlands resource areas. Approximately 2.9 acres of the proponent's repaving of the surface parking area will occur within the 100 ft wetlands buffer area and will result in temporary impacts to inland bank and Riverfront Area. According to the proponent, the proposed redevelopment project's stormwater management system has been designed to achieve, to the maximum extent possible, 80 percent removal of the project site's annual total suspended solids (TSS) load and will incorporate the use of new and existing hooded deep sump catch basins located along the western perimeter of the property, to collect a portion of the stormwater flows from the retail plaza site prior to discharge to River Meadow Brook.

A portion of the stormwater flows will continue to be discharged through paved swales to River Meadow Brook. All new roof drains from the Target building will be collected and piped to a new on-site infiltration trench.

In their comments, MassDEP has indicated that River Meadow Brook is an impaired water body due to high level of pathogens. The project site is also considered by MassDEP as an Area of Higher Potential Pollutant Load and is subject to Standard 5 of MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy which includes requirements for pretreatment of stormwater and source reduction. According to MassDEP, the proponent's stormwater management plan must include measures to ensure that stormwater from the project site is adequately treated prior to discharge to River Meadow Brook. Specifically, MassDEP has asked that the proponent incorporate the use of low impact development (LID) measures and best management practices (BMPs) into the project's stormwater management plan including: the reduction of impervious surface areas, and the use of permeable surface parking materials and landscaped bioretention areas/rain gardens, filter strips and tree boxes within the surface parking areas. I adopt these comments as my own and ask that the proponent consult with MassDEP and EEA's Smart Growth Coordinator to identify opportunities for incorporating innovative (LID) design measures into the project design to improve the management of stormwater runoff from the project site.

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 the proposed project do not warrant the preparation of an EIR. Issues related to drainage and stormwater management, and project layout can be addressed during the permitting and environmental review process.

August 24, 2007
Date


Ian A. Bowles, Secretary

Comments received:

08/01/07	Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)
08/11/07	RJ O'Connell & Associates, Inc.
08/14/07	Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG)
08/15/07	Executive Office of Transportation – Office of Transportation Planning (EOT)
08/17/07	Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
08/21/07	Hannaford Bros. Co.

IAB/NCZ/ncz
ENF #14063