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September 14, 2006

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

PROJECT NAME: Westpark
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Westfield
PROJECT WATERSHED: Connecticut
EOEA NUMBER: 13651
PROJECT PROPONENT: Pride Limited Partnership
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: August 8, 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 the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) submitted for this project **adequately and properly complies** with MEPA and its implementing regulations. The proponent may prepare and submit the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for MEPA review.

Project Description

As described in the DEIR, the proposed project involves the development of a mixed-use commercial development with approximately 68,900 square feet (sf) of building area on a 14.3-acre site on the east side of Southampton Road (Routes 10/202) near the Massachusetts Turnpike Interchange 3 in Westfield. The owner of the project site is the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA). The 14.3-acre site includes five individual lots, described as Lots 2,3,4,5 and 6. The MTA describes the site as Parcel 1 (encompassing Lots 2-5) and Parcel 2 (Lots 6).

Currently there is an existing Friendly's Restaurant on the extreme southwest corner of

Parcel 1 but the rest of the site is an unimproved dirt and gravel area. Parcel 2, known as the “Jug Handle Parcel” has been previously altered and contains a mixture of scrub vegetation, gravel and bare soil cover. In the early 1990s, a project similar to what is currently proposed on the site underwent MEPA review (EOEA #8680). That project was never constructed.

As currently planned, the project will include the development of a 5,000 sf sit-down restaurant on the Jug Handle Parcel and the development of four additional uses occupying approximately 63,900 sf of building space on Parcel 1 (a fast-food restaurant with drive-through window; a bank; a hotel; and a gasoline/diesel fueling station with a convenience store). The project will also include construction of 292 new parking spaces to service the new commercial uses in surface lots; a 58-space Commuter Parking Lot and a 38-space Truck Parking Lot.

Changes Since ENF Review

Since the submittal of the ENF, the proposed building program has been modified to include a specific proposed use on the Jug Handle Parcel (the ENF indicated that the Jug Handle Parcel land use and site layout would be presented in the DEIR). The proposed use on the Jug Handle Parcel is a 5,000 sf sit-down restaurant. In the ENF, the sit-down restaurant was proposed to be located on the northwest part of Parcel 1. With the relocation of this restaurant to the Jug Handle Parcel, the northwest part of Parcel 1 is proposed to be the site for a 3,230 sf bank with drive-through service.

In addition, as a result of height restrictions related to the nearby Westfield Barnes Airport, the proposed 80-room hotel has been reduced from five stories to three stories in height. The footprint of the hotel has necessarily increased in area in order to maintain the 80-room program. The overall square footage of the development has increased by approximately 5,600 sf.

The project site design provides landscape buffers for each of the commercial use sites in accordance with local zoning requirements. In addition, at the request of Tighe & Bonde, the owner of the abutting property to the north of the site, a 15-foot buffer will be provided along the north property line and a 50-foot wide buffer will be provided between that abutting property and the commuter and truck parking lot areas. These will be landscaped buffers with a combination of fencing and vegetation to provide screening.

Jurisdiction

The project is undergoing review and is subject to the preparation of a Mandatory EIR pursuant to Sections 11.03 (1)(b)(2) and 11.03 (6)(b)(14) of the MEPA regulations because it will create more than 5 acres of new impervious surface and will generate more than 1,000 new average daily trips (adt) and create more than 150 new parking spaces at a single location. The project requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); an Access Permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway); a Sewer Connection/Extension Permit from the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP); and a Special Permit and Site

Plan Approval from the Westfield Planning Board. The project site is owned by the MTA, an Agency of the Commonwealth. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction over the project is broad, and shall extend to all aspects of the project that are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause Damage to the Environment.

The purpose of MEPA review is to ensure that a project proponent studies feasible alternatives to a proposed project; fully discloses environmental impacts of a proposed project; and incorporates all feasible means to avoid, minimize, or mitigate Damage to the Environment as defined by the MEPA statute. I have fully examined the record before me, including but not limited to the Scope issued on November 7, 2005, the DEIR filed in response; and the comments entered into the record. I find that the DEIR is sufficiently responsive to the requirements of the MEPA regulations and the Scope to meet the regulatory standard for adequacy. The proponent has provided a considerable amount of detailed information about the project and its potential impacts and proposed mitigation. In the FEIR, the proponent should respond to the remaining issues outlined in this Certificate that are for the most part related to the project's impacts on traffic.

SCOPE

General

The FEIR should discuss any changes to the project since the filing of the DEIR and provide an update on the local and state permits required for the project. The FEIR should contain a copy of this Certificate and a copy of each comment received. The FEIR should respond to the comments received, to the extent that the comments are within MEPA subject matter jurisdiction. The FEIR should present additional narrative and/or technical analysis as necessary to respond to the concerns raised.

The FEIR should be circulated in compliance with Section 11.16 of the MEPA regulations and copies should be sent to any state agencies from which the proponent will seek permits or approvals, to the list of "comments received" below, and to Westfield officials. A copy of the FEIR should be made available for public review at the Westfield Public Library.

Alternatives

The Certificate on the ENF required that the proponent conduct a comprehensive alternatives analysis that evaluated a reduced build alternative that could result in the creation of less impervious surface and less daily vehicle trips. The DEIR considered the environmental impacts of a no-build alternative, a "Shopping Center Plan" alternative, the ENF proposed plan and the preferred alternative. The Shopping Center Plan represented an early development scenario contemplated by the Proponent that was downsized to accommodate construction of the commuter and truck parking lots. The ENF proposed plan represented a reduction of 21,100 sf of building space from the Shopping Center Plan alternative.

While the preferred alternative represents a slight increase in the building program from that proposed in the ENF because of the inclusion of the restaurant on the Jug-Handle parcel, it actually results in the creation of less impervious surface. By reducing the onsite parking supply on Parcel 1 and by specifying the use of pervious gravel surface for the Truck Parking Lot, the preferred alternative will result in approximately 8 percent less impervious surface than in the ENF plan. The DEIR concludes that the preferred alternative has been selected because it provides the best site access; includes design measures aimed at minimizing site congestion and safety concerns at the access points to Route 10/202; accommodates excellent pedestrian access within the development; and, compared to the ENF plan, reduces water demand/wastewater generation, and minimizes the creation of new impervious cover. The proponent may carry the preferred alternative forward to the FEIR.

Land Alteration/Drainage

The project as proposed will result in less new impervious surface than was outlined in the ENF. This reduction in impervious surface has been achieved in spite of the fact that impervious surface will now be created on the Jug Handle Parcel and that the footprint of the proposed hotel has expanded. The preferred alternative presented in the DEIR achieves this reduction in impervious surface by reducing the onsite parking supply on Parcel 1 and by specifying the use of pervious gravel paving for the 2.68-acre truck parking lot in the northeast corner of the site.

The DEIR states that the proposed development will include the construction of a new stormwater management system that will fully comply with MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy and guidelines. Each of the individual commercial uses at the project site will have an individual closed drainage system with collection of runoff from parking and pavement areas into hooded deep-sump catch basins. The collected runoff will be conveyed to underground detention structures designed to provide detention for the 2-year storm event and to allow for some infiltration to groundwater. Runoff from building roofs will be collected and also conveyed to the underground detention structures. In precipitation events greater than the 2-year storm, overflow from the individual underground detention systems will be directed through pipes to two onsite vegetated surface detention basins.

The DEIR provided a discussion of compliance with the MassDEP Stormwater Management Policy and the EPA's NPDES Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities. The DEIR also contained a draft Operation and Maintenance Plan for the project which detailed pavement maintenance, stormwater system maintenance and trash removal.

The Certificate on the ENF also required that the proponent provide a discussion of possible Low Impact Development (LID) measures that could be incorporated into the site design. The DEIR states that while LID techniques aimed at reducing environmental impacts on "green" sites are not applicable due to the to highly altered nature of the site, the project has incorporated measures to help reduce stormwater runoff and potential non-point source pollution from the project site.

Transportation

According to the DEIR, the project will generate approximately 5,390 new vehicle trips per day (tpd). Due to the inclusion of the proposed sit-down restaurant, this daily trip generation is approximately 550 more than presented in the ENF. Two new internal site roadways (the "East/West Roadway" and the "North/South Roadway") will be constructed and serve as the primary access to the development and will intersect with three existing roadways: Friendly Way to the south, Route 10/202 to the west, and Westfield Industrial Park Road and Owens District Road to the east.

The DEIR includes the results of a Traffic Impact and Analysis Study (TIAS) that has been updated since the submission of the ENF. In response to comments from MassHighway, as part of the FEIR the proponent should expand the study area to include the intersections of Route 10/202 at North Road; Route 10/202 at Summit Lock Road/Falcon Drive, and Route 10/202 at Servistar Industrial Way. In addition, a more detailed traffic signal warrant analysis should be provided for each of the unsignalized intersections within the study area.

The FEIR should address MassHighway's concerns about proposed conceptual land configuration, geometry and curb cut access at the intersections of Westfield Industrial Park Road at Friendly Way and Westpark North/South Roadway, and Route 10/202 at MassPike Interchange 3 and Friendly Way. The proponent should continue to work with MassHighway to determine the feasibility, appropriateness and timing of these additional improvements prior to the submission of the FEIR. The FEIR should also respond to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's (PVPC) comments regarding the intersection of Southampton Road and Notre Dame Street.

MassHighway is planning the implementation of a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to address existing and anticipated future deficiencies along the Southampton Road (Route 10/202) corridor, including the intersection with the Massachusetts Turnpike Interchange 3. During the preparation of the TIAS, the proponent worked with the City of Westfield, MassHighway and MTA officials to help identify and confirm roadway improvements in the TIP. The DEIR provided a discussion of the \$1.2 million in funding that has been authorized by the Massachusetts General Court for the TIP improvements, which has now been identified as a Regional Priority Project. In addition, the legislature has also enacted an Economic Stimulus Package associated with the construction of the Target Distribution Center project (EOEA #13361) approving \$2.1 million for roadway improvements in the area.

The Westpark and the Target proponent have together committed to MassHighway to fund the preparation of 25 percent level design plans for these roadway improvements. The proponent understands and is committed to assuring that these improvements will be completed prior to the occupancy of the proposed project. The proponent should respond to comments from MassHighway about the impacts of a delay or modification to the Southampton Road improvement project. In addition, the proponent should respond to MassHighway's suggestion that it and the Target Distribution Center should commit to funding the 100% design plans for the improvement project.

As part of the TIAS, the proponent also developed additional recommended roadway improvements and mitigation to help address anticipated traffic congestion at the intersections of Pride Drive/Southampton Road/Colonial Pine Acres South Driveway; North/South Roadway at Westfield Industrial Park Road/Friendly Way; and at Southampton Road/Turnpike Interchange 3 Roadway/Friendly Way. The FEIR should discuss the possibility of the proponent implementing these additional improvements to help relieve congestion on the Route 101/202 corridor and at the MTA Exit 3.

In the DEIR, the proponent stated that it will consider the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures aimed at reducing site trip generation:

- Staggered work hours to allow a flexible work schedule in order to reduce weekday morning and evening peak hour trips on adjacent roadways.
- Shared trips provided by the wide variety of on-site uses that cater to adjacent street traffic or traffic that is already on the existing roadway.
- Pedestrian accommodations, including sidewalks, will be provided along the main site roadways to promote shared trips between the uses.
- The proponent will work with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) and PVPC to review current bus services to the site and potentially provide a bus bay on Southampton Road just to the north of Friendly Way.

In the FEIR, the proponent should commit to actually implementing TDM measures. Given that TDM measures are generally less effective at retail and mixed use developments than at office developments, the proponent should focus its efforts on providing effective pedestrian, bicycle and public transit connections to the development so that users have a variety of transit options. The proponent should also continue to work with the PVTA to evaluate the possibility of increasing service frequency to the site.

Parking

The Certificate on the ENF requested that the proponent provide additional detail on the proposed truck parking lot and commuter parking lot to be developed on the project site. The proponent is constructing the truck parking lot for the City of Westfield and the commuter parking lot for the MTA, and the operation of these facilities will be turned over to the City and the MTA respectively. The proponent will work with the City of Westfield to provide daily maintenance at the proposed restroom facilities at the truck parking lot facility. The City of Westfield has committed to patrolling the truck parking lot area on a routine daily basis to ensure that trucks using the area comply with the Massachusetts Anti-Idling Law (M.G.L. c. 90, ss.16A).

Wastewater

The project will generate an anticipated 19,464 gpd of wastewater to be discharged to the municipal collection system. The City of Westfield wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 6.2 million gallons per day (mgd) and is currently receiving an average daily flow of 4 mgd. The proponent states in the DEIR that discussions with City officials and plant operators

indicate that the proposed connections to the municipal system can be accommodated at the treatment plant. Upon completion of the MEPA review process, the proponent will apply for a MassDEP Sewer Extension Permit that will formally confirm the City's agreement to accept and provide treatment of the project's wastewater flows.

Mitigation

The DEIR presents a Draft Section 61 Finding for the MassDEP Sewer Extension Permit and a Draft Letter of Commitment for use by MassHighway that include mitigation commitments covering areas of impact. While the municipal sanitary sewer system has the capacity to accommodate the additional flows related to the project, the proponent has committed to the following measures to reduce the impacts of water consumption and wastewater generation:

- Installation of low flow plumbing fixtures
- Irrigation systems with rain sensors for automatic bypass during rain events
- Installation of grease traps for each individual development as needed
- Oil and gas separators at the gas station for the treatment of stormwater prior to discharge

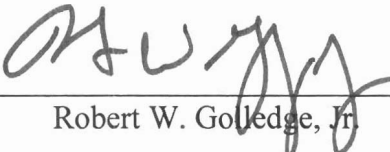
The proponent is also committed to implementing the following traffic mitigation as outlined in the Draft Letter of Commitment for MassHighway:

- The proponent is committed to continue to work with the City of Westfield, MassHighway, the MTA and other area property owners to identify further improvements that might enhance the Southampton Road TIP.
- Together with the Target Distribution Center project, the proponent has committed to providing the funding for the preparation of 25 percent level design plans for the TIP roadway improvements.
- Coordinate with MassHighway on providing additional right-of-way to implement intersection and roadway improvements along the Route 10/202 corridor.
- Construct an east/west roadway connecting Westfield Industrial Park Road to Route 10/202 to provide an alternate route bypassing the intersection of Friendly Way and MassPike Interchange 3.
- Construct a 38 space truck parking lot for the City of Westfield.
- Construct a 58 space commuter parking lot and coordinate with the MassPike on making this an official park-n-ride lot.
- Construct pedestrian sidewalks along a portion of Owens District Road, Westfield Industrial Park Road and the project's east/west and north/south roadways.
- Coordinate with the PVTA/PVPC on providing a bus bay on Route 10/202 directly in front of the site and on the easterly side of the roadway (or internally to the site).
- The proponent will implement a Transportation Demand Management program aimed to decrease single occupant vehicle travel to the site.

The Final Section 61 Findings should be included in the FEIR with any modifications noted. The Section 61 Findings should contain a clear commitment to mitigation, an estimate of the individual costs of the proposed mitigation, and the identification of the parties responsible for implementing the mitigation. A schedule for the implementation of mitigation should also be included. The Findings will be included with all state permits issued for this project, and will be considered binding upon the proponent as mitigation commitments.

September 14, 2006

Date



Robert W. Golledge, Jr.

Comments received:

- 9/6/2006 Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- 9/7/2006 Department of Environmental Protection, Western Regional Office
- 9/7/2006 Executive Office of Transportation

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