Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs ■ MEPA Office

ENF Environmental Notification Form

For Office Use Only
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
EOEA No: 13662 "R"
MEPA Analyst: BRIONY ANGUS
Phone: 617-626-1029

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: Peabody Bikeway		
Street: N/A		
Municipality: Peabody, MA	Watershed: Ipswich River/North Shore	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Start: 15469016.065N 1094243.020E End 15456440.551N 1115719.355E	Latitude: Start 42°34'09"N End 42°32'10"N Longitude: Start 71°01'42"W End 70°56'51"W	
Estimated commencement date:Fall 2006	Estimated completion date: Fall 2008	
Approximate cost: $2,740,000	Status of project design: 100% Design	
Proponent: City of Peabody		
Street: 24 Lowell Street		
Municipality: Peabody	State: MA	Zip Code: 01960
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this ENF May Be Obtained: Blair Haney, City Planner		
Firm/Agency: Peabody Planning Dept.	Street: 24 Lowell Street	
Municipality: Peabody	State: MA	Zip Code: 01960
Phone: 978.538.5783	Fax: 978.538.5987	E-mail: blair.haney@peabody-ma.gov

Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)? ☐Yes ☒No

Has this project been filed with MEPA before? ☒Yes (EOEA No. 13662) ☐No

Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before? ☐Yes (EOEA No._____) ☒No

Is this an Expanded ENF (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) requesting:

a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8))	☐Yes	☒No
a Special Review Procedure? (see 301CMR 11.09)	☐Yes	☒No
a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11)	☐Yes	☒No
a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11)	☐Yes	☒No

Identify any financial assistance or land transfer from an agency of the Commonwealth, including the agency name and the amount of funding or land area (in acres):
MassHighway, $2,740,000

Are you requesting coordinated review with any other federal, state, regional, or local agency? ☐Yes(Specify_____) ☒No

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals:MA DEP NOI/Order of Conditions; NPDES Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities

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Comment period is limited. For information call 617-626-1020

Which ENF or EIR review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03):

- ☒ Land
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Energy
- ☐ ACEC
- ☒ Rare Species
- ☐ Wastewater
- ☐ Air
- ☐ Regulations
- ☐ Wetlands, Waterways, & Tidelands
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Solid & Hazardous Waste
- ☐ Historical & Archaeological Resources

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total
LAND			
Total site acreage	44.8		
New acres of land altered		12.2	
Acres of impervious area	0.56	+5.02	5.58
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		4,741	
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		1,409	
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		0.002	
STRUCTURES			
Gross square footage			N/A
Number of housing units			N/A
Maximum height (in feet)			N/A
TRANSPORTATION			
Vehicle trips per day			N/A
Parking spaces			N/A
WATER/WASTEWATER			
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use			N/A
GPD water withdrawal			N/A
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment			N/A
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)			N/A

State Permits & Approvals

- ☒ Order of Conditions
- ☐ Superseding Order of Conditions
- ☐ Chapter 91 License
- ☐ 401 Water Quality Certification
- ☐ MHD or MDC Access Permit
- ☐ Water Management Act Permit
- ☐ New Source Approval
- ☐ DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit
- ☐ Other Permits (*including Legislative Approvals*) – Specify:

CONSERVATION LAND: Will the project involve the conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

Will it involve the release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

RARE SPECIES: Does the project site include Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities?

☒Yes (Specify): **Estimated Habitat, Blue Spotted Salamander** ☐No

HISTORICAL /ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Does the project site include any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

If yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☐No

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN: Is the project in or adjacent to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project description should include **(a)** a description of the project site, **(b)** a description of both on-site and off-site alternatives and the impacts associated with each alternative, and **(c)** potential on-site and off-site mitigation measures for each alternative (*You may attach one additional page, if necessary.*)

a.) General. The City of Peabody is proposing to reuse an existing abandoned railroad track bed as a multi-use recreational trail. The trail will provide year-round recreational opportunities to bicyclists, pedestrians and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

The project area is an abandoned railroad track bed running generally northwesterly from the city center. The former railway was constructed in the 19th century on an alignment along riverbank and through wetlands to make best use of flat grades which are characteristic of those areas. Consequently, both sides of the former rail corridor are flanked by wetlands areas in many locations. Since the abandonment of the rail line, little or no maintenance has been performed along the rail bed, resulting in overgrowth of grass, weeds and brush along the old right-of-way (ROW).

It was originally conceived that the proposed Bikeway would extend from Russell Street at the Middleton town line to downtown Peabody. Close examination of the preliminary Bikeway alignment between downtown Peabody and the North Shore Mall revealed that no municipal right-of-ways were available to use for the Bikeway's path. Without these right-of-ways, a downtown Peabody – North Shore Mall recreational trail segment is not feasible to construct. Consequently, a 4.6-mile path connecting Russell Street at the City's western edge with the North Shore Mall area is the only recreational trail project which can be feasibly constructed.

The 4.6 mile long Peabody Bikeway will be constructed in two sections. One section will be in West Peabody, along the Ipswich River. The other section will parallel the existing Proctor Brook trail through central Peabody. The Peabody bikeway will generally consist of a ten (10) foot bituminous concrete surface roadway with two (2) foot wide crushed stone shoulders on either side of the roadway. Where sections of the proposed bikeway must extend through developed areas, existing pavement will be reconstructed and re-striped as needed to provide a safe bikeway corridor. Various appurtenances, such as timber safety fences, benches, and informational signage are to be installed along the bikeway at appropriate locations.

b.) On-Site/Off-Site Alternatives. Re-use of the former railroad ROW for a recreational trail provides potential trail users with a safe, protected, relatively flat and scenic route for their activities. Few other man-made venues exist that are suited to bicycle/recreational trail construction as unused railroad trackbeds. No other suitable sites with characteristics similar to the project area exist within the Peabody city limits for this type of use.

Converting the former railroad ROW to a recreational trail provides some environmental benefits. Minor redevelopment of portions of the former ROW has already occurred. The proposed bikeway will occupy and largely preserve property that would otherwise be subject to continued piecemeal development over time. Development of the ROW as a recreational trail will preclude other types of development that, over time, would likely degrade the impacted resource areas in a more severe manner than the proposed bikeway.

Given the close proximity of wetlands, floodways and streambed, these protected areas will be impacted by the proposed bikeway. It is estimated that this project will disturb 4,741 sq. ft. of bordering vegetative wetlands (BVW), 95 sq. ft. of land under water (LUW), 107,784 cubic feet of existing fill in bordering land subject to flooding, 354,458 sq. ft. of riverfront area, and 49 lineal feet of bank. These impacts are distributed somewhat uniformly along most of the 4.6 mile length of the bikeway.

c.) **On-Site/Off-Site Mitigation of Impacts.** The impacts to BVW areas by the proposed bikeway will be mitigated by replication of wetlands. It is anticipated that the wetlands replication will be made at two areas along the proposed bikeway adjacent to the existing wetland areas.

A key design intent for the project was to maintain existing drainage patterns to the maximum extent possible. For the most part, the Peabody Bikeway storm drainage arrangements will utilize sheet flow off the paved roadway directed away from developed properties. Where the bikeway passes through cut sections, existing trackside drainage features will generally be reused.

The project is not expected to increase peak flows in into local waterways because of the limited width of pavement and extensive use of overland sheet flow. These measures will greatly minimize runoff from the bikeway. Furthermore, since the bikeway corridor is generally the closest land parcel to receiving waterways, its peak flows will crest long before peak flows from distant, more densely developed tributary areas begin discharging to receiving waterways. Existing culvert crossings will be re-utilized whenever possible to minimize disturbances to protected areas. If culverts are partly intact, they will be re-constructed as far as it is feasible to do. When new culvert installations are necessary, they will maintain present hydraulic openings for the stream channels. Disturbances to protected areas will be kept to a minimum, and disturbed areas will be restored to pre-existing conditions upon completion of construction.

Numerous plantings will take place along the Peabody Bikeway to screen it at some locations. At approaches to at-grade roadway crossings and other locations, planting will control erosion. Resource areas will be protected from sedimentation/erosion using haybale barriers and siltation fences. Inlets or catch basins that collect runoff from construction areas will be protected with haybale rings or other measures. Regular inspections will be made to ensure these sedimentation/erosion control measures remain in sound condition.

A limited amount of Bikeway construction work will take place in close proximity to areas which are noted as estimated habitat for a variety of salamander listed as a "species of special concern" by the Massachusetts National Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). These areas are vernal pools and surrounding upland forest areas where the blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*) breeds, forages and hibernates. A Wetlands Resource Area & Estimated Habitat Impact Report was prepared for and submitted to NHESP for their review on June 17, 2005. Based on its review of the Impact Report, the NHESP issued a letter on August 11, 2005, in which NHESP states that the project, in NHESP's opinion, will not adversely affect the actual resource habitat of *A. laterale*, and as such will not constitute a "take" of this species, provided that conditions stipulated in the letter are adhered to during construction.