

ENF Environmental Notification Form

For Office Use Only
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
 EOE No.: *14482*
 MEPA Analyst: *Aisling Eglinton*
 Phone: 617-626-*1024*

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: Charles River/Alewife Connector – Multi-Use Path – Phase 1		
Street: Arsenal Street		
Municipality: Watertown	Watershed: Charles River	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:	Latitude: 42.3639106° N Longitude: 71.1670281° W	
Estimated commencement date:	Estimated completion date:	
Approximate cost: \$1.5 million	Status of project design: 100 %complete	
Proponent: Department of Conservation and Recreation		
Street: 251 Causeway Street, Suite 600		
Municipality: Boston	State: MA	Zip Code: 02114-2104
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this ENF May Be Obtained: Gene Crouch		
Firm/Agency: Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.	Street: 101 Walnut Street	
Municipality: Watertown	State: Ma	Zip Code: 02116
Phone: (617) 973-8281	Fax: (617) 973-8879	E-mail: gcrouch@vhb.com

- 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. _____) 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): Project construction to be funded by MassHighway and requires a permanent easement on City of Cambridge watershed land in Watertown

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

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals:

Categorical Exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act.

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

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

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
LAND				<input type="checkbox"/> Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Superseding Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 91 License <input type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification <input type="checkbox"/> MHD or MDC Access Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Water Management Act Permit <input type="checkbox"/> New Source Approval <input type="checkbox"/> DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Permits (including Legislative Approvals) – Specify: Article 97 approval
Total site acreage	2.8 ac.			
New acres of land altered		2.8 ac.		
Acres of impervious area	0	0.84 ac.	0.84 ac.	
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		0		
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		0		
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		0		
STRUCTURES				
Gross square footage	0	0	0	
Number of housing units	0	0	0	
Maximum height (in feet)	0	0	0	
TRANSPORTATION				
Vehicle trips per day	0	0	0	
Parking spaces	0	0	0	
WATER/WASTEWATER				
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	0	0	0	
GPD water withdrawal	0	0	0	
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	0	0	0	
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	0	0	0	

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 A permanent easement will be required over City of Cambridge watershed land for 800 feet of the bikeway. This transference of property rights results in a disposition of Article 97 protected land.) 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 _____) 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.*)

The proposed Charles River/ Alewife Connector Multi-use path extends approximately 0.7 miles along the former Boston and Maine railroad corridor. The project will be a 10-foot wide paved path that begins at School Street and ends at the Arlington Street intersection in Watertown, Massachusetts. Currently, this rail alignment is unimproved and vegetation prohibits the use of this alignment as a walking or biking trail.

The proposed path will follow the abandoned Boston & Maine railroad Right-of-Way, which the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC) purchased from Guilford Transportation in 2000. EOTC then transferred the Right-of-Way to the MDC which is now the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The western limit of the project is at School Street very near its intersection with Arsenal Street and the eastern limit is at the Arlington Street, Crawford Street, Nichols Avenue, and Coolidge Hill Road intersection. The approximately 3,650 linear foot path is expected to serve as a recreational path for nearby residents as well as a commuter route for the region. It will provide the first segment of a potential future connection between the Minuteman Path at Alewife Station in Cambridge and Watertown Square, where it is planned to connect with the Dr. Paul Dudley White Bikepath adjacent to the Charles River.

Surface Condition

For the majority of the 0.7 miles of proposed pathway, the existing railroad rails, ties and ballast are still present. There is a visibly worn foot-path in various levels of repair between Wheeler Court and Arlington Street. Dense vegetation has grown up around and onto the rail bed from adjacent land areas.

Cross Section and Drainage

The existing cross sectional width of the rail bed varies from 8 to 20 feet, on a relatively flat embankment. The profile of the rail bed is generally level and the horizontal alignment of the rail is along a relatively flat curve. Railroad grades are notoriously flat and this corridor is no exception. In addition, much of the Right-of-Way (ROW) has been physically abandoned for some time. Vegetation has encroached into the ROW and clogged ditch drainage systems. In some cases, development on adjacent parcels discharges runoff into the railroad ROW.

Wetlands

There are no state or federal wetland resource areas along the alignment adjacent to the existing railroad.

Path Alignment, Cross Section and Details

In general, the proposed alignment of the multi-use path follows the existing track alignment, to reduce the impacts to the surrounding properties and vegetation, and to utilize the clear width of the rails. The path begins at the back of the existing sidewalk on School Street and continues for 0.7 miles to the Arlington Street, Crawford Street, Nichols Avenue, and Coolidge Hill Road intersection.

The typical cross section for the path has been designed to accommodate a 10 foot wide path with Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) pavement with grass shoulders. Wooden safety rails have been designed to protect users from areas where the path embankment may drop off at a slope greater than 3:1, and at locations where the path

needs to be defined from the surrounding properties. An open drainage system will be utilized along the path to collect drainage from the HMA surface and direct it to a formal drainage system, where feasible.

Gateways have been designed with semicircular granite cobble path entrances and a granite pillar with the "DCR" emblem engraved on the pillar. Bike racks will be placed at gateways, and signage for path users to notify them of the roadway crossing. Landscaping in the form of low shrub plantings will be placed intermittently along the project.

A landscaping, comprising of shrubs and pine trees are proposed to improve the aesthetics along the corridor and to provide screening.

Cambridge Waterline Spur

The Multi-use path is proposed along a 60 inch waterline owned by the City of Cambridge. This path will begin in the Watertown Mall Parking lot and travel approximately 800 feet to Arsenal Street. The 10 foot wide path will terminate and the existing sidewalk at the intersection of the Mall Driveways with Arsenal Street.

Arlington Street/ Nichols Ave/ Crawford St/ Coolidge Hill Rd Intersection

The Town of Watertown has taken initiative to complete traffic signal improvements at this intersection. The improvements planned are part of a separate project that will address vehicular and pedestrian circulation and the permanent path crossing.

As such, the path crossing made to this intersection as part of this project is intended to be a temporary measure until full traffic signal improvements are implemented by the Town. To improve the path entrance at this location, a granite pillar and semi circular granite cobble surface treatment is proposed at this gateway, similar to that at the School Street path entrance.

Drainage

Vegetation has encroached into the existing rail bed and has overgrown the existing ditch drainage systems. This project will re-establish the existing open drainage ditch systems. The proposed drainage ditches on either side of the path shall be designed to collect the runoff from the path surface and either infiltrate the runoff, or convey it to a proposed or existing infiltration basin. Drainage structures, such as catch basins are not proposed as part of this project.

Roadway Crossings

The proposed multi-use path intersects with the intersection of Arlington Street, Nichols Avenue, Coolidge Hill Road and Crawford Street. This intersection will provide signage and pavement markings to alert path users and motorists of the crossing. As part of this project, the only proposed modifications to the existing intersection include the relocation of a traffic signal post and the construction of cement concrete wheelchair ramps. This intersection is currently under design by the City of Watertown and will be upgraded as part of a Mass Highway project to meet current MUTCD, ADA and Mass Highway standards.

This path also intersects the Verizon driveway. Proper signage and pavement markings have been designed at this crossing to alert path users of the driveway crossing.