

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
 Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office

Environmental Notification Form

For Office Use Only

EEA#: 15869

MEPA Analyst: Erin Flaherty

The information requested on this form must be completed in order to submit a document electronically for review under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: Damon Road Reconstruction Project		
Street Address: Damon Road		
Municipality: Northampton	Watershed: Connecticut	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:	Latitude: 42.337173	Longitude: -72.627631
Estimated commencement date: September 2019	Estimated completion date: November 2022	
Project Type: Roadway reconstruction	Status of project design: 75 %complete	
Proponent: Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Highway Division		
Street Address: 10 Park Plaza, Room 4260		
Municipality: Boston	State: MA	Zip Code: 02116
Name of Contact Person: Tory Fletcher		
Firm/Agency: Normandeu Associates, Inc.	Street Address: 25 Nashua Road	
Municipality: Bedford	State: NH	Zip Code: 03110
Phone: (603)637-1121	Fax: -	E-mail: tletcher@normandeu.com
Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
If this is an Expanded Environmental Notification Form (ENF) (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) or a Notice of Project Change (NPC), are you requesting:		
a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8))	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
a Special Review Procedure? (see 301CMR 11.09)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>(Note: Greenhouse Gas Emissions analysis must be included in the Expanded ENF.)</i>		
Which MEPA review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03)?		
11.03 CMR (6)(b)(1.b) - widening of an existing roadway by four or more feet for one-half or more miles and (2.b) cut five or more living public shade trees at 14" or greater in diameter at breast height.		
Which State Agency Permits will the project require? None anticipated.		
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: The Project is expected to be constructed by MassDOT and contractors utilizing funds from the 2018 Transportation Improvement Program for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization.		

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Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total
LAND			
Total site acreage	15.35		
New acres of land altered		11.96 (primarily within existing roadway layout)	
Acres of impervious area	8.36	1.42	9.79
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		1,002 (977 s.f. temporary, 25 s.f. permanent. Project also includes mitigation for 683 s.f. of permanent BVW impact from prior MassDOT slope stabilization project)	
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		87,871 Riverfront Area 47 Land Under Water 369 Bank (313 l.f. temporary, 56 l.f. permanent) 17,798 BLSF	
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 (feet)	0	0	0
TRANSPORTATION			
Vehicle trips per day	17,650 (2016)	No change; the Project will not generate vehicle trips	17,650 (2016)
Parking spaces - NA	0	0	0
WASTEWATER			
Water Use (Gallons per day)	0	0	0
Water withdrawal (GPD)	0	0	0
Wastewater generation/treatment (GPD)	0	0	0
Length of water mains (miles)	0	0	0
Length of sewer mains (miles)	0	0	0
Has this project been filed with MEPA before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (EEA # _____) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			
<p>A prior proposed MassDOT project involving improvements to and reconstruction of Damon Road was previously designed to the 25% design submission level and an Environmental Notification Form ("ENF") was submitted to MEPA. That project was determined to not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") as part of the Secretary's Certificate on the ENF issued August 24, 2000 (EOEA No. 12221). Due to lapse of time since issuance of the prior Certificate, a new ENF is being submitted as required for this Project and the improvements to Damon Road as described herein. Further, the Project design has been revised to improve upon its ability to accommodate multi-modal transportation, as well as to enhance stormwater treatment.</p>			
Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (EEA # 12221) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

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GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION – all proponents must fill out this section

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Describe the existing conditions and land uses on the project site:

The Project area includes the Damon Road roadway corridor from approximately 550 feet west of the King Street intersection on Bridge Road to just south of the Norwottuck Rail Trail on Damon Road in Northampton, Massachusetts. The Project limits along the corridor extend approximately 5,200 feet (0.98 miles) along Damon Road and an additional 1,450 feet (0.27 miles) along King Street (Route 5) and other intersecting side streets for a total Project length of approximately 6,650 feet (1.26 miles).

Damon Road is a two-lane road with a Functional Classification of "Urban Minor Arterial" that runs in an east/west configuration. It serves as a major connection between the I-91 southbound on-ramp and northbound off-ramp at Route 9 on Bridge Street (Route 9) and the I-91 northbound on-ramp on King Street (Route 5/Route 10) crossing under I-91 Bridge No. N-19-064. The posted speed limit along Damon Road ranges from 30 miles per hour (mph) to 35 mph. Damon Road generally consists of one paved travel lane in each direction with no shoulders or sidewalks. There are currently no delineated bicycle accommodations or striped shoulders along Damon Road. Within the Project limits, Damon Road is classified as a Major Collector and is under the City of Northampton jurisdiction.

The Project site consists of the paved Damon Road travel corridor surrounded by primarily commercial and residential development interspersed with forested uplands and forested wetlands associated with the Connecticut River, which is located generally east and northeast of the roadway. Interstate I-91 is generally located west of, and parallels, Damon Road for the majority of the Project area. Land uses along Damon Road consist mainly of commercial uses and vegetated areas, as well as medium density residential development. Industrial land uses occur adjacent to the Project corridor along its southern extent. Land use distribution is primarily commercial from the beginning of the Project limits proximate to King Street, moving in an easterly direction to approximately 0.5 miles along the Project corridor where surrounding land use transitions to primarily residential and forested uses. The portion of King Street (Route 5/Route 10) within the Project limits is surrounded by primarily commercial land use and includes a gas station at the southeast corner of the intersection with Damon Road.

There are protected open space properties located along the northern boundary of the Project corridor associated with Elwell State Park, which is protected in perpetuity. The deed for the parkland states that the property was conveyed to the City of Northampton under the provisions of Chapter 40 Section 8C, to be managed and controlled by the Northampton Conservation Commission for passive recreation and conservation purposes. Elwell Island is located to the east and north of the Project site, within the Connecticut River. The Elwell Island Acquisition is identified as a parcel funded by the Land and Water Conservation fund. The Project does not involve any work within this parcel. No other publicly-owned parks, recreational areas, or wildlife refuges fall within the Project limits.

State jurisdictional wetland resource areas field-delineated within the Project area include Bordering Vegetated Wetland and Bank. Additional Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act ("WPA") resource areas identified within the Project area include 200-ft Riverfront Area, Land Under Water, and Bordering Land Subject to Flooding. According to the applicable U.S. Geological Survey topographic map, there are two USGS-designated perennial streams that cross

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Damon Road within the Project limits, one proximate to the intersection of Damon Road and N. King Street and one near the mid-point of the Project corridor. The mapped perennial stream near the mid-point of the Project area was not observed within the Project limits. This stream is likely a remnant mapping feature from prior to development of the area that no longer exists. Topography within the Project area is varied, generally consisting of the level roadway corridor and level developed and paved areas. There are steeply downward sloping areas located northeast of Damon Road in forested areas between the roadway and the Connecticut River.

According to the applicable Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") Flood Insurance Rate Map for the City of Northampton, Massachusetts, Hampshire County, Community Panel No. 250167 0002 A, dated April 3, 1978, portions of the Study Area are located within "Zone A13 - Area of 100 year flood" at base flood elevation 125 referenced to the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929.

There are areas mapped by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program ("NHESP") as Priority Habitats of Rare Species and Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife within the forested section of the Project area between Damon Road and the Connecticut River. There are no NHESP-mapped Certified or Potential Vernal Pools within the Project limits. The Project area is not located within any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern ("ACEC") as designated by the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs under the ACEC regulations (301 CMR 12.00) or within any Outstanding Resource Waters protected under the Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards (314 CMR 4.00).

Please see the figures provided in Attachment A for additional information regarding existing conditions and environmental constraints within the Project area.

Describe the proposed project and its programmatic and physical elements:

The purpose of the proposed Project is to reconstruct and improve the functionality of the Damon Road corridor, including the construction of a 10-foot wide shared-use path from the Norwottuck Rail Trail to River Run Road, and to enhance treatment of stormwater runoff throughout the entire Damon Road corridor.

The primary programmatic and physical elements of the Project include:

- Providing contiguous accessible pedestrian accommodations;
- Improving bicycle accommodations;
- Improving pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular safety, capacity and level-of-service through the installation of a traffic control system and a shared-use path connecting to the Norwottuck Rail Trail;
- Reconstructing pavement along Damon Road to increase roadway width and provide designated shoulders and bike lanes;
- Upgrading the stormwater drainage system; and
- Improving geometry (where possible) of minor street approaches.

The Project also involves reconstructing the Damon Road and King Street (Route 5) intersection and installing new traffic signal equipment and full pedestrian accommodations at this location. New sidewalks will be added along both sides of the roadway including ADA-compliant wheelchair ramps at all intersections. In addition to the shared-use path, a pedestrian crossing signal is proposed at the intersection of Damon Road and River Run where the proposed shared-use-path ends.

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The Project also involves full depth pavement reconstruction, micromilling and hot mix asphalt overlay, stormwater drainage repairs and improvements, the above-described ADA-compliant cement concrete sidewalks and ramps, and granite curbing, as well as new pavement markings and signing throughout the Project area.

These proposed improvements will result in a substantial upgrade to both pedestrian and bicycle accommodations while also improving safety along the corridor. These improvements will also provide substantial stormwater drainage benefits. The improved cross sections of Damon Road will be more consistent and have better delineation of travel lanes and shoulders through new signing and pavement markings, improving public safety and traffic operations.

Temporary easements are proposed to facilitate grading and limited tree removal. Damon Road is under the jurisdiction of the City of Northampton and therefore all trees within the layout that are 14" or more at breast height are considered public shade trees. All public shade trees will be identified on the Project plans. The Project proposes to remove seven (7) public shade trees within the City layout limits.

The Project is scheduled to be funded through the 2019 Transportation Improvement Program for the Pioneer Valley Planning Organization.

Wetland Resource Area Impacts

The proposed stormwater management improvements will involve temporary and permanent alteration of wetland resource areas within the Project limits. The Project also involves the planned mitigation for 683 s.f. of permanent BVW impact associated with a prior MassDOT emergency abutment and slope stabilization project conducted at the Norwottuck Rail Trail bridge site. Jurisdictional wetland resource areas have been identified and delineated within 100 feet of the Project right-of-way and in the specific areas within which stormwater improvements are proposed.

Alteration of wetland resource areas will result from proposed improvements to and reconfiguration of existing stormwater conveyances, culverts, and headwalls at three locations and stormwater management improvements at the south extent of Damon Road including the removal of a deteriorated culvert, headwall and debris and associated daylighting of approximately 75 feet of existing viaduct brook (i.e. intermittent stream). All proposed alterations of wetland resource areas result from these improvements to existing damaged and deteriorated stormwater features that are intended to improve stormwater treatment and water quality at the Project site.

Permanent loss of wetland resource areas has been limited to 25 s.f. of Bordering Vegetated Wetland ("BVW") at one of the culvert outlet locations. Wetland resource areas that will be temporarily impacted by the Project include BVW, Land Under Waterbodies and Waterways ("LUW"), Bank, Bordering Land Subject to Flooding ("BLSF"), and 200-ft Riverfront Area ("RFA"), the majority of which is previously developed and/or degraded RFA. No loss of flood storage is proposed. Temporary wetland alteration includes 977 SF of impact to BVW, 47 SF of impact to LUW, 369 SF of impact to Bank, 17,798 SF of impact to BLSF, and 87,871 SF of impact to RFA, the majority of which may be considered previously developed and degraded (i.e. consists of existing paved roadway, contains structures, riprap surfaces, stormwater structures, etc.).

Please see the Wetlands, Waterways and Tidelands Section below for more specific information on proposed temporary and permanent wetland impacts.

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Rare Species

The Project falls within mapped Priority and Estimated Habitats of the yellow lamp mussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*) and the green dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*). MassDOT submitted a MESA Project Review Checklist for MassDOT Highway Division Projects to NHESP on March 16, 2018. NHESP issued a determination on March 20, 2018 stating that based on a review of the information that was provided and the information that is currently contained in the NHESP database, the Division determined that this project, as currently proposed, will not result in a prohibited Take of state-listed rare species (see Attachment E – NHESP No-Take Determination).

NOTE: The project description should summarize both the project's direct and indirect impacts (including construction period impacts) in terms of their magnitude, geographic extent, duration and frequency, and reversibility, as applicable. It should also discuss the infrastructure requirements of the project and the capacity of the municipal and/or regional infrastructure to sustain these requirements into the future.

Describe the on-site project alternatives (and alternative off-site locations, if applicable), considered by the proponent, including at least one feasible alternative that is allowed under current zoning, and the reasons(s) that they were not selected as the preferred alternative:

Operational deficiencies and capacity constraints currently exist at the intersections of Damon Road with King Street (Route 5/10)/Bridge Road and Industrial Drive, which result in substantial delays and queuing along Damon Road, particularly during the weekday morning and evening peak traffic periods. In addition, numerous safety concerns have been identified by MassDOT for the corridor. Despite a mix of residential and commercial uses in the area and the proximity to the Norwottuck Rail Trail, there is currently no pedestrian or bicycle accommodations along the corridor. During the initial project planning and conceptual development, a number of alternatives were investigated for the reconstruction of Damon Road. Traffic operations, right-of-way impacts, construction costs, environmental impacts, and safety concerns were factors for choosing the current configuration of roadway improvements included in the preferred alternative.

Design Alternatives

Signal Warrants Alternative

Installation of a fully-actuated traffic signal was considered at the Damon Road/River Run Road intersection to improve traffic operations and safety; however, a review of signal warrants indicated that a traffic signal at this location is not currently warranted based on the existing volumes of traffic exiting River Run Road. River Run Road currently provides access to approximately 215 residential condominium units, which is the primary generator of vehicle trips entering and exiting River Run Road. A secondary driveway to the Yankee Mattress Factory is also provided on River Run Road, but generates very little vehicular traffic. MassDOT conducted an analysis of turning movement counts at the intersection of Damon Road/River Run Road and compared the existing hourly traffic volumes at the Damon Road/River Run Road intersection to the signal warranting criteria contained in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices ("MUTCD") for the following warrants to assess whether installation of a traffic signal is warranted at the Damon Road/River Run Road intersection:

- Warrant 1 – Eight-Hour Vehicular Volume

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- Warrant 2 – Four-Hour Vehicular Volume
- Warrant 3 – Peak Hour

Based on MassDOT's evaluation of current vehicle speeds and volume of vehicles per hour, the criteria for Warrants 1, 2, and 3 were not met. As the current traffic volumes along River Run Road do not meet thresholds for installation of a traffic signal, MassDOT rejected this alternative involving installation of a fully-actuated traffic signal at this location. Should additional development occur along River Run Road in the future, installation of a traffic signal would be reevaluated.

Shoulder Width Alternative

To reduce property impacts and construct the improvements within the existing edges of pavement, MassDOT considered providing 4-foot shoulders along each side of Damon Road between River Run Road and the Norwottuck Rail Trail. MassDOT's Healthy Transportation Policy, however, recommends 5-foot shoulders to accommodate bicycle traffic. Therefore, in the preferred alternative 5-foot shoulders have been included instead of 4-foot shoulders to provide a design consistent with MassDOT's Healthy Transportation Policy.

Sidewalk Location Alternatives

Multiple alternatives were considered by MassDOT for the placement of sidewalks and the multi-use trail along Damon Road. Two alternatives were considered for the layout of Damon Road under the I-91 Northbound and Southbound overpasses. One alternative provided a 5.5-foot sidewalk with vertical granite curb on the front side of the bridge piers, immediately against the roadway. This alternative also provided two 11-foot travel lanes with a ± 5 -foot shoulder in the westbound direction and a single 11-foot lane with a ± 6 -foot shoulder in the eastbound direction. The results of a capacity and queue analysis indicated that two westbound through lanes were needed under the I-91 overpasses to accommodate the vehicle queues extending from the signalized intersection of Damon Road/Industrial Drive. Therefore, the sidewalk was located on the back side of the bridge piers to allow for the construction of a three-lane cross-section under the bridges. The preferred alternative will provide two 11-foot westbound travel lanes with a 5-foot bike lane and one 11-foot eastbound travel lane with a 6-foot bike lane under the I-91 overpasses.

Consideration was also given to providing sidewalks along both sides of Damon Road, consistent with MassDOT's Healthy Transportation Policy; however, the concrete columns for the I-91 overpass limit the ability to provide sidewalks on both sides of the roadway in this area. Significant grading impacts to the existing slope under the overpass and construction of a retaining wall would be required in order to provide a sidewalk on both sides of Damon Road. The construction of this sidewalk would result in significant additional costs that are not justified given the limited pedestrian demand for a sidewalk along the southerly side of Damon Road in this area. Therefore, the preferred alternative contains a ± 600 -foot section of Damon Road where no sidewalk is provided on the southerly side between Industrial Drive and River Run Road. Signalized pedestrian crossings are provided at the Industrial Drive and River Run Road intersections to allow pedestrians to cross to the sidewalk on the northerly side of the roadway, providing a continuous pedestrian connection along the entire length of Damon Road.

Additionally, two alternatives were examined for the location of sidewalks at the King Street (Route 5/10)/Damon Road/Bridge Road intersection. One alternative included construction of sidewalk only along the southerly side of Bridge Road and Damon Road in the vicinity of this intersection to reduce the size of property takings along these roadways. This alternative proposed a signalized