

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

Environmental Notification Form

For Office Use Only

EEA#: _____

MEPA Analyst: _____

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: DeBerry-Homer Elementary School										
Street Address: 680 Union Street										
Municipality: Springfield	Watershed: Connecticut River									
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:	Latitude: 42° 06' 31.64" N Longitude: 72° 33' 57.69" W									
Estimated commencement date: 06/01/21	Estimated completion date: 06/01/24									
Project Type: New School Building	Status of project design: 50% complete									
Proponent: Domenic J. Sarno, Mayor, City of Springfield										
Street Address: City Hall, 36 Court Street										
Municipality: Springfield	State: MA	Zip Code: 01103								
Name of Contact Person: Janet Carter Bernardo, P.E.										
Firm/Agency: Horsley Witten Group, Inc.	Street Address: 90 Route 6A									
Municipality: Sandwich	State: MA	Zip Code: 02563								
Phone: (508) 833-6600	Fax: (508) 833-3150	E-mail: jbernardo@horsleywitten.com								
<p>Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>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:</p> <table style="width:100%"><tr><td>a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8))</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</td></tr><tr><td>a Special Review Procedure? (see 301CMR 11.09)</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</td></tr><tr><td>a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11)</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</td></tr><tr><td>a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11)</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</td></tr></table> <p>(Note: Greenhouse Gas Emissions analysis must be included in the Expanded ENF.)</p> <p>Which MEPA review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03)? (1) Land (b) 3. Conversion of land held for natural resources purposes in accordance with Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97.</p> <p>Which State Agency Permits will the project require? No State Agency Permits are required.</p> <p>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: Funding: Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Max Total Facilities Grant = \$52,962,759</p>			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
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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									

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total
LAND			
Total site acreage	~ 5.53 ac.		
New acres of land altered		0	
Acres of impervious area	2.12 ac.	+2.33	4.40 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	56,964	99,086	155,990
Number of housing units	0	0	0
Maximum height (feet)	41 ft.	+7 ft.	48 ft.
TRANSPORTATION			
Vehicle trips per day	595	+1,181	1,776
Parking spaces	45	+119	164
WASTEWATER			
Water Use (Gallons per day)	2,000 GPD	+8,600 GPD	10,600 GPD
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			
Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (EEA #_____) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION – all proponents must fill out this section

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

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

This publicly owned school project is proposed within a 5.53± acre property owned by the City of Springfield. The rectangular site is bounded by Monroe Street to the north, Eastern Avenue to the east, Union Street to the south, and residential properties to the west. The existing DeBerry School, which was constructed in 1951 and expanded in 1968, occupies the western half of the site. DeBerry Park is located on the eastern half of the site; House Bill H.4277 authorizing the City of Springfield to convert this park land to school use was signed by the Governor on June 4, 2020, placing the entire parcel under the use and control of Springfield Public Schools. A site locus on a United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map is included here as **Figure 1**.

The lot currently contains the William N. DeBerry Elementary School (DeBerry School), a large single building facility that has a one-story addition with a parking lot, playground, basketball court, and baseball diamond. The playing field area is primarily grass with small trees outlining the sides of the property. Historically, several residential buildings and other structures were demolished to create the DeBerry Park site. The lot generally drains via surface flow and catch basins onsite through a closed pipe network to the combined sewer systems in Monroe Street and Union Street. These systems both flow west to Hancock Street and discharge into the same 60-inch combined system in Hancock Street that ultimately flows south.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey of Hampden County, Massachusetts, Central Part (2018), the site consists of a mix of Windsor loamy sand and Urban land. The hydrologic soil group (HSG) associated with these soils is A and unclassified (respectively); however, a series of borings were performed between August 7 and 9, 2019 and April 7 and 8, 2020 to better characterize the soils. Borings generally revealed soils that were either entirely fine to medium sand, or 2 feet to 6.5 feet of sandy fill underlain by fine to medium sand. The Soil Survey Map is included as **Figure 2** and the Geotechnical Recommendations, dated May 1, 2020, are included as **Attachment A**.

The project area is not located within the 100-year floodplain as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (**Figure 3**). The project area is not within any MassDEP Zone II wellhead protection areas, nor any areas of critical environmental concern. The project site is not in a critical habitat for endangered or threatened species.

Describe the proposed project and its programmatic and physical elements:

The new DeBerry-Homer Elementary School located at 680 Union Street, will replace the existing DeBerry and Homer neighborhood elementary schools which are 70 and 120 years old, respectively. Refer to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Preferred Solution, dated October 23, 2019 included as **Attachment B**. The project site consists of the entire 5.53± acre property owned by the City of Springfield. The proposed project includes an 800-student elementary school, grades kindergarten to fifth (K-5), as well as 120 prekindergarten students (Pre-K), with parking, playground areas, and appurtenances. Refer to **Figures 1-5** for the USGS locus map, Soil Survey, FEMA, Aerial Photo, and Existing Constraints for the site.

The proposed project consists of the following site development activities:

- An elementary school for 800 K-5 students and 120 Pre-K students;
- Multiple playgrounds and two basketball courts;
- Separate bus drop-offs lanes;
- Access driveways and 187 parking spaces;
- Pedestrian walkways and landscaped areas;
- Low impact design (LID) stormwater management systems; and
- Underground utilities that include city water and sewer, natural gas; electricity, and communication services.

During construction, the existing DeBerry School will remain fully operational. A barrier will be installed to provide access to the existing school building and provide separation from the portion of the site being actively constructed. Once the new building is complete, the student body will be relocated into the new building and the existing building will be demolished. The new parking lot and bus drop off lane will be constructed in the area occupied by the existing building.

Potable water and wastewater services will be supplied by the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC). The water service will be connected to the municipal water main in Union Street. The wastewater connection will be to the existing combined sewer in Union Street. The Applicant has worked with SWSC who have confirmed that the municipal systems will have adequate capacity to service the new school. The proposed stormwater system onsite will displace a large amount of the existing 'treatment' load by retaining the stormwater portion of the load onsite for up to the 100-year storm event. This will be achieved through a series of underground infiltration chambers located onsite.

For additional details see the project site plans in **Attachment C**:

"DeBerry/Homer Elementary School, Springfield, Massachusetts" prepared by DiNisco Design, Horsley Witten Group, Inc., and Brown & Sardina Inc., dated January 14, 2021.

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:

Alternatives Analysis

The Proponent explored several alternatives to the proposed design, considering the criteria specified in the City of Springfield's request for proposals for the construction of an elementary school for 800 K-5 students including an additional 120 Pre-K students. These design considerations include three (3) locations with several alternatives. The final alternative, Alternative 4 at Site 3 (a new 920 student school) was the preferred alternative (the proposed project). An application for Article 97 for repurposing the existing open space adjacent to the DeBerry School was approved by the City in May 2018 and provides the many various alternatives considered for development. The preferred alternative meets the project objective of providing educational facilities and programming in the City of Springfield, and the region. This is further detailed in the MSBA Final Evaluation of Alternatives, dated October 23, 2019, included in **Attachment D**. The other alternatives were dismissed as they did not meet the logistical or programming considerations of this primary project objective. The layouts for the various alternatives considered can also be found in **Attachment D**.

The location choices were as follows:

1. Homer School Site – This site is the location of the existing Homer School. It was considered for a renovation/addition for 800 students K-5 plus 120 Pre-K students, as well as new construction for 800 students K-5 plus 120 Pre-K students. The school is bounded by Homer Street, Wilbraham Road and Reed Street in the Upper Hill neighborhood of Springfield. The site is less than 2 acres and surrounded by dense urban neighborhoods on three sides and American International College to the west. Due to the small site area, this site was dismissed as inadequate for the program.
2. Wilbraham Avenue – A site on Wilbraham Avenue was considered for the new construction of a 400-student K-5 school plus 60 Pre-K students and new construction of an 800-student K-5 school, plus 120 students in Pre-K, consolidating the Homer and DeBerry Schools within one building. The 4.5-acre site is bounded to the east by Wilbraham Avenue and to the west by a Buckeye Pipeline right of way. To the north are industrial buildings and Springfield Water and Sewer Commission vehicle lots. Site access is

via King Street to the south. The site is very long and narrow making it difficult to lay out an efficient school. Several options were explored; however, the proximity to industrial uses and the narrowness of the site ultimately led to exclusion from further consideration.

3. **DeBerry School Site** – The DeBerry School site was evaluated for several alternatives. The first option, *Alternative 1* – would update the existing school to code for 280 K-5 students. For *Alternative 2* – a new, 400-student, K-5 (plus 60 Pre-K students) school building was considered. Alternatives 1 and 2 were for the DeBerry School population only. In addition, the DeBerry School site was a consideration for *Alternative 3* – a renovation / addition of the DeBerry School for 800 students, K-5 (plus 120 Pre-K students). This option would merge the Homer School population into the proposed project. The DeBerry School site is also a consideration for *Alternative 4* – a new, 800-student, K-5 (plus 120 Pre-K students) school building, which would include combining the Homer School population with the DeBerry School population. The DeBerry School is located on a 5.53± acre site in the Old Hill neighborhood. The site is surrounded on two sides by a densely settled urban residential neighborhood. To the north are rear parking lots for the businesses on Wilbraham Road and State Street. The site is relatively flat with no known wetlands.

There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) onsite. The DeBerry School site does have an impact to 2.84 acres of Article 97 land. The City of Springfield has passed an order to set aside 3.43 acres of land at an adjacent site approximately 0.5 miles to the east as a new park. This new park will be designated as undeveloped open space and Article 97 land in lieu of the impact to the DeBerry park land.

An alternative analysis was done for the DeBerry School site to evaluate the potential impact and best use of the DeBerry School site for the facilities and programming proposed. Four alternatives were evaluated, as well as a no action. These findings are as follows:

- **No Action:**

The No Action Alternative was considered, and although this alternative would avoid impacts to the surrounding area, it would also not address the primary project purpose of providing education facilities and programming for students in the City of Springfield. Under this alternative the lack of adequate facilities and programming would remain and for this reason, the No Action Alternative was not chosen.

- **Alternative 1:** DeBerry Only (Code Upgrade Option)

Alternative 1 included repair of systems and/or scope required for purposes of code compliance with no modification of existing spaces or their function. Alternative 1 analyzed the cost of repairing the existing building to the standards of a full renovation of the existing building program areas, mechanical / electrical replacement, and code upgrades.

With this alternative, wastewater flow does not change significantly from the existing condition. Traffic would not change from the existing condition compared to the Preferred Alternative. This alternative provides school capacity for only 280 students. In addition, Alternative 1 would result in about the same impervious cover as existing and less than the Preferred Alternative, while retaining more of the existing recreational area.

This alternative does not increase the programming or capacity of students. There are no proposed architectural or site development drawings included herein representing this option, as this drawing exercise could not depict a viable layout to accommodate the 30,000 sf of space required to satisfy the educational program. Therefore, this option has been dismissed by the School District.

- **Alternative 2:** DeBerry Only (New) – All new construction for a 400-student K-5 school plus 60 Pre-K students.

Alternative 2 considered the option to build a new, 400-student school adjacent to the existing school, allowing the existing school to be occupied during construction. The program for the 400-student school requires one classroom wing extending from a block of core spaces. The cafetorium and media center are the focal points of the school and are easily accessed upon entry into the building. There are two grades