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April 21, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME: Worcester State College Parking Garage  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Worcester  
PROJECT WATERSHED: Blackstone  
EOEA NUMBER: 13762  
PROJECT PROPONENT: Massachusetts State College Building Authority  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: March 22, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M.G.L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project entails the construction of a 553-space parking garage and the expansion of an existing surface parking lot by 53 spaces at Worcester State College. Construction of the garage will result in the elimination of 83 existing surface parking spaces at the proposed garage site. The net increase in parking spaces with the construction of the new parking garage and the expansion of the existing surface lot will be 523 spaces. The Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) will fund construction of the parking garage through the issuance of bonds.

The project is undergoing review pursuant to Section 11.03 (6)(b)(15) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in the creation of 300 new parking spaces at a single location. The project requires a Building Permit from the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety; and an Order of Conditions from the Worcester Conservation Commission. Because the proponent is seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the project, MEPA jurisdiction extends to all aspects of the project that may cause significant Damage to the Environment as defined in the MEPA statute.

The proposed parking garage will be located on the perimeter of the campus in the southeasterly corner. The 6 ½ story garage will be sited partially within an existing hillside to reduce its view from neighboring residences. A sheet wall retaining system, landscaped buffers and diffused lighting will also help to minimize the impacts of the parking garage on abutting residential areas.

The construction of the parking garage will result in approximately 0.5 new acres of impervious surface and the expansion of the surface parking lot will create approximately 0.34 acres of new impervious surface. Stormwater runoff from the garage structure and roof and from the surface lot will be routed through a stormwater management system that will decrease the peak stormwater flow rate to a level below the pre-construction rate. The project will improve stormwater quality with the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) including deep sump hooded catch basins, and high efficiency water quality structures such as Stormceptors or Vortech units. Stormwater runoff from both facilities will be discharged to detention basins prior to discharge to an adjacent wetland in the case of the surface lot, and to the existing campus closed drainage system in the case of the parking structure.

The expansion of the surface parking lot will necessitate limited activities within the 100-foot buffer zone to a Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW) area. The proponent will be seeking an Order of Conditions from the Worcester Conservation Commission for the proposed work. According to the ENF, the project will include an erosion and sedimentation control program to prevent impacts to resource areas during construction.

Although the project is designed to meet existing parking demands at the College, the ENF estimates that the project may result in 786 new daily vehicle trips into the campus. The proponent prepared a traffic impact and access study to assess the traffic impacts of the project. While the findings of the study indicate that the project will not adversely impact traffic operations and safety on-campus and in the vicinity of the College, the proponent has recommended several short- and long-term measures to improve traffic and pedestrian operations at the site. I encourage the College and the City of Worcester to work collaboratively to implement the mitigation as outlined in the ENF.

I conclude that no further MEPA review is required. The review of the ENF has served to adequately disclose the impacts and mitigation associated with the project, and to demonstrate that the impacts of the project do not warrant the preparation of an EIR.

April 21, 2006  
Date

  
Stephen R. Pritchard

No comments received

SRP/BA/ba