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February 10, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ON THE NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

PROJECT NAME	: Naval Air Station Redevelopment Project
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY	: Abington, Rockland and Weymouth
PROJECT WATERSHED	: Weymouth and Weir, North and South Rivers, and Taunton
EOEA NUMBER	: 11085R
PROJECT PROPONENT	: South Shore Tri-Town Development Corporation (SSTTDC) and LNR South Shore LLC
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR	: December 15, 2005

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G.L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I have reviewed the Notice of Project Change (NPC) submitted on this project and hereby determine that it requires the preparation of a revised Scope for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). I also hereby determine that the NPC incorporates sufficient information to grant the requested Phase I waiver, pursuant to the Special Review Procedure, subject to conditions described below.

I applaud the proponent for presenting a revised project that that demonstrates a strong commitment to a transit-oriented, smart-growth redevelopment of the South Weymouth Naval Air Station. I would also like to commend the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for their invaluable role in the progress reflected in the NPC. The NPC illustrates a project proposal that is responsive to the direction of previous MEPA Certificates, and it is clear that the proponent's extensive planning efforts and consultation and coordination with the towns of Abington, Rockland, and Weymouth, the CAC, regional interests, and state and federal agencies, have resulted in a project that has the potential to establish a new standard for environmentally responsible development. I will look forward to reviewing in the Draft EIR a detailed discussion of how the specific application of contemporary principles of planning and development – currently presented in the NPC largely in thematic terms – will characterize the individual elements and overall nature of the redevelopment.

I recognize that the potential benefits of the proposed redevelopment are significant to the Commonwealth's environmental, housing, and economic interests. I also recognize, however, the potential impacts the project could have to environmental resources and the quality of life in the host communities. In particular, potential impacts to local and regional roadways have been identified as a major concern by many of the public comment letters I have received, especially as they relate to the initial phase of development. Commentors have also expressed concern with the potential impacts associated with construction and occupation of both the initial and overall development to wildlife habitat, water quality, and other critical resources. I have carefully conditioned the Phase I waiver to ensure that impacts are appropriately minimized and mitigated, and I will expect the Draft EIR to provide, for the overall redevelopment program, a full analysis of alternatives and measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to the natural and human environment.

Project History

The proposed project, which involves the redevelopment of the South Weymouth Naval Air Station, was the subject of an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) filed with the MEPA Office in July 2000, a Phase I Report (May 2002) and a Phase I Status Update (June 2003). A Special Review Procedure was established for the project (October 11, 2000) which enabled the creation of a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), allowed for a phased approach to the project and coordinated MEPA/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of transportation elements. The Secretary's Certificate on the Phase I Report granted a waiver allowing Phase I to proceed, under certain conditions, prior to completion of the EIR for the entire project. Since the filing of the Phase I Report, the proposed redevelopment, including the Phase I portion, has been redesigned. The proponent submitted a Notice of Project Change (December 15, 2005) that describes project changes and requests that the Phase I waiver granted in 2002 be continued.

Project Description and Proposed Changes

The proposed project, referred to as *The Village Center Plan* in the NPC, consists of up to 2,850 residential units, 2 million square feet (sf) of commercial/industrial space, 9-13 playing fields, an 18-hole golf course, and institutional space (including sites for a school and civic/community facilities). The project also involves associated infrastructure development including an on-site wastewater treatment facility, and water supply infrastructure, road construction and other transportation improvements, and a multi-modal transportation center based on expansion of the existing commuter rail station in South Weymouth. The project is proposed for implementation in 3-4¹ phases over a 12-year period.

The proposed project has been redesigned since the filing of the Phase I Report resulting in a new *Village Center Master Plan* for redevelopment of the base, which was approved through town vote in May-July 2005 by the Towns of Abington, Rockland and Weymouth. The NPC describes proposed changes in the master plan including a move

¹ The *Village Center Master Plan* identifies three phases. However, there may be four phases since the project proposed under the MEPA Phase I waiver request consists of a portion of the Master Plan's "Phase I".

towards a more compact, transit-oriented, mixed-use development that is more aligned with smart growth and sustainable design principles. Significant changes in the master plan include an increase in residential units proposed (from 700 to 2,855), as well as an increase in water use, wastewater generation and impervious area. Traffic impacts have been reduced and are now estimated at 20,000 vehicle trips per day (a decrease of approximately 30,000 from the previous plan), and commercial and other non-residential development has been reduced from 2.8 million square feet (sf) to 2 million sf. The proposed Route 3 Connector Road has been eliminated and a new East-West Parkway is proposed with local road connections to Route 3. The NPC also proposes a temporary access road prior to the second phase of the *Village Center Master Plan*².

Based on the new master plan proposed in the NPC, the project will result in an increase in potable water use from 525,000 gallons per day (gpd) to 1.4 million gallons per day (mgd), and an increase in irrigation water from 522,000 gpd to 650,000 gpd. Wastewater generation will increase from 420,000 gpd to 1.3 mgd. Site uses in the previous plan included 2.5 million square feet (sf) of Office/Research and Development (R&D) and 300,000 sf of retail space. The new master plan includes 1.5 million sf of office/R&D/Light industrial space and up to 500,000 sf of retail, hotel, civic and other uses.

The overall project site acreage has decreased by 64 acres (from 1450 to 1,386) due to deducting some U.S. Coast Guard land that will not be transferred from the Navy. Land alteration is estimated at 675 acres (a decrease of 30 acres from the previous proposal). The total amount of impervious area for the project will increase by 120 acres (from 230 to 350 acres³). Wetlands impacts, which were not determined in the 2002 Phase I Report, are estimated at approximately 37,000 sf (on-site) and 30,000 sf (off-site). The project includes approximately 4 miles of sewer mains and 6 miles of water mains on-site and 6-8 miles of water mains construction off-site.

Jurisdiction

The proposed project exceeds a number of thresholds for a mandatory EIR review, including thresholds pertaining to land alteration, creation of impervious area, vehicle trip generation and parking spaces, water supply, and wetlands. The project is also undergoing MEPA review because of potential impacts to rare species, and historical and archaeological resources, and because of impacts associated with wastewater generation.

The project is undergoing MEPA review and requires the preparation of a mandatory EIR pursuant to: Sections 11.03(1)(a)(1) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in alteration of 50 or more acres of land; 11.03(1)(a)(2) because it involves creation of 10 acres or more of impervious area; 11.03(3)(a)(2) because involves an alteration requiring a variance in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act; 11.03(4)(a)(3) because it involves construction of new water mains ten or more miles in length; 11.03(4)(a)(2) because it

² This temporary access road is not covered under the MEPA Phase I waiver and cannot be commenced until the EIR process for the entire project is complete.

³ The "previously reviewed" impervious area was incorrectly stated in the NPC, which indicated a decrease of 257 acres (from 607 to 350 acres).

