

Town of Marion Shared Use Path General Project Questions

Question

When will the project be built?

Answer

Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in Fall of 2025. The final schedule will be based on the process of soliciting a contractor to construct the SUP. The project is expected to advertise a legal notice for bids by Spring 2025.

Question

How much will the project cost?

Answer

The project program cost is approximately \$5.49M. It will be financed with a combination of funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Question

How many access points will be provided for path users?

Answer

In addition to the access points at the Mattapoisett/Marion town line and at the SUP's Point Road terminus, access points will be available at Washburn Park, at the intersection of Route 105/Spring St. and on Point Road.

Question

How much parking will be provided for trail users?

Answer

The project design includes the addition of 15 parking spaces for trail users. These will be located at Washburn Lane (12) and Point Road (3).

Question

Will there be any seating benches on the trail?

Answer

Yes. The project design includes the addition of 24 seating benches for trail users. These will be located throughout the Shared Use Path (SUP) corridor.

Question

Who will own the SUP?

Answer

The Town of Marion will own the SUP and maintain it after construction is completed.

Question

What additional permits and approvals are needed for the SUP?

Answer

In addition to review by the MEPA Office, the project requires the following approvals and permits:

- Order of Conditions from Marion Conservation Commission
- State Highway Access Permit from MassDOT
- Secretary's Certificate from MEPA Office
- NHESP approval of Species Protection Plan
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Self-Verification Notification Form (SVNF)

Question

Will there be a formal Public Hearing for this project?

Answer

Yes. There will be a hearing for Notice of Intent held by the Marion Conservation Commission.

Environmental Impact Questions

Question

Why does the Shared Use Path require an Environmental Notification Form/Expanded Environmental Notification Form?

Answer

A project falls under jurisdiction of Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) if it is undertaken by a state agency, requires a permit from a State Agency, or it involves Financial Assistance or a Land Transfer by a State Agency. MEPA Regulations (301 CMR 11.03) establish review thresholds that determine whether or not a project is required to file an Environmental Notification Form with the MEPA Office and the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The thresholds exceeded resulting in the need for an ENF/EENF for the SUP include:

- a. Creation of five or more acres of impervious area. The SUP will have approximately 5.2 acres of new impervious surface.
- b. Alteration of 1 half or more acres of any other wetlands (per 301 CMR 11.03 (3) Wetlands, Waterways and Tidelands, (b)1(f)). The SUP will have approximately 2.14 acres of other wetland impact (LSCSF and RFA).
- c. Construction work on Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF) totaling over 1 acre, and Riverfront Area (RFA) totaling 1 acre. (per 310 CMR 10.02 (1)(b) and (1)(f). The proposed SUP is expected to involve work in both areas.)

Question

What is MEPA and how does this project get reviewed?

Answer

MEPA requires that state agencies study the environmental consequences of their actions with a mandate to take all feasible measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate damage to the environment. This includes an obligation that state agencies use all practicable means and measures to minimize damage to the environment. This is achieved through studying alternatives to the proposed project and developing enforceable mitigation commitments. The latter become conditions for the project if and when they are permitted.

MEPA only applies to projects proposed by a state agency, municipality, nonprofit, or private parties that exceed specific review thresholds, require action by a state agency action, and need permits, financial assistance, or land transfer from state agencies.

MEPA review is not a permitting process. Requirements are focused on public study, disclosure, and development of feasible mitigation for proposed projects. Decisions on whether a project can or should receive a particular permit are left to specific permitting entities. MEPA review

takes place prior to the permitting process, which ensures that all interested parties are fully cognizant of environmental consequences of their actions.

The MEPA process is public and encourages comments from citizens and from state, regional and local agencies. It is led by the MEPA Office, which is part of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The MEPA Office solicits comments from the general public and agencies and represents the EEA for public consultation sessions on projects. It also coordinates project review with the proponent, consultants, as well as interested agencies and citizens. It further makes recommendation to the Secretary of EEA regarding the adequacy of environmental documentation submitted for a project.

Question

Where can residents and interested parties obtain copies of the project's EENF?

Answer

Notice of Availability of the EENF will be published in the Environmental Monitor.
<https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/EEA/MEPA-eMonitor/home>

Question

How can I submit a comment about the project's EENF?

Answer

It is recommended that comments be provided through the Environmental Monitor link to the EENF at: <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/EEA/MEPA-eMonitor/home>

When published for availability, a public comments portal will be provided with the EENF. The Environmental Monitor is a bi-weekly publication that provides notice of new projects that have been submitted to the MEPA Office for review, other projects currently under review, certificates, and public notices. It is published two times a month. All members of the public can sign up for E-mail notifications if they would like to receive a notice when the newest edition is available (send a blank email to subscribe-mepa_environmentalmonitor@listserv.state.ma.us. Please ensure that both the subject line and the body of the email are blank and that the email does not contain an automatic signature.)

Question

When will the EENF be available to the public?

Answer

The EENF is expected to be published in the Environmental Monitor in March of 2024.

Question

How long is the comment period for the EENF?

Answer

An EENF Filing that request a Single EIR are typically subject to a 37-day review period, including a 30-day public comment period.

Question

Does the SUP project require a MEPA Environmental Impact Report?

Answer

Yes. Under the Act, any project that contains an Environmental Justice Population (in whole or in part) within the “Designated Geographic Area” (DGA) of the project site is required to submit an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with 301 CMR 11.06(7)(b).