

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 21, 2024**

**Present:** Chair Tolopko, Chair; April Doroski (left at 7:19 PM), Vice-Chair; Tom Dennis, Member; Kathy Davis, Member; Jess Schoendorf (arrived at 6:05 PM), Member; Terry Rosenfeld, Member; Rebekah Cornell, Conservation Administrator; and Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Chair Tolopko called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the virtual meeting protocols.

9 attendees were present at the meeting according to the Zoom Attendance report (attached).

**Agenda Item #1 --- Open Public Forum**

Commissioner Davis addressed the Commission. At a previous meeting, the Commission discussed management of the hay fields at the River to Range parking lot on Ferry Street. At that meeting, she shared concern for Monarch Butterfly habitat as Milkweed appeared to be present in the fields. In hindsight, she felt that adequate information was not available for discussion that night and looked forward to acquiring more information to develop an appropriate management plan.

Mark Stinson, MassDEP, addressed the Commission. He was attending the meeting as a guest and was available to offer any guidance on permitting questions if the Commission desired.

Commissioner Schoendorf joined the meeting at 6:05 PM.

**Agenda Item #3 — Public Hearing: request for an Order of Conditions filed by MassDOT. The proposed project will address flooding at an existing culvert on Route 116 (Amherst Road) through the restoration of the downstream channel. The project will require work in Bordering Vegetated Wetland and Bank along an unnamed intermittent tributary to Batchelor Brook. Located at 315 Amherst Rd (Map 58 Parcel 86)**

Billie Li, District Environmental Engineer for MassDOT, was present at the meeting. She shared a slideshow (attached) which detailed the purpose of the Notice of Intent. In an effort to combat flooding and culvert back up, MassDOT was seeking to reestablish an impaired channelized stream within the right of way at 315 Amherst Road. The NOI included ongoing site maintenance to ensure the system would function as intended.

Commissioner Tolopko asked how wide and deep the channel would be. She also asked if the origin of the sedimentation was known. Billie Li responded that the width and depth of the channel would be determined in the field. These improvements were considered maintenance which only allowed for a minimal budget. As envisioned, one foot of material would be excavated at a time until the desired result was achieved. The current sedimentation was likely

the result of lack of maintenance. This would be prevented through channel stabilization and an ongoing maintenance plan.

Vice-Chair Doroski asked if the channel would tie into a system downstream and if those systems were assessed. She also inquired about the quality of the soil posed for removal during channel restoration. Billie Li responded that work could only be performed within their existing easement which limited the scope of investigation. The excavated soils would be accessed in the field. It was MassDOT's intention to return the site to its previous conditions with established channelized flow.

Commissioner Schoendorf asked for information about the previous condition of the channel and what created its existing condition. Billie Li responded that the channel was not a perennial stream, it appeared to be an intermittent stream that was becoming a wetland. Lack of maintenance likely created these conditions.

Commissioner Schoendorf asked about plans for invasive species management. Billie Li responded that work would only occur in the MassDOT easement. Management was not planned as any removal within the easement would quickly be overtaken by the present invasive plants. If any management were to take place, no chemicals would be used.

Vice-Chair Doroski asked what machinery was intended to be used. Billie Li responded that a determination would be made in the field but heavy machinery was not intended for use.

Administrator Cornell reviewed drafted special conditions associated with approval. Vice-Chair Doroski recommended that a special condition be added requiring the applicant to provide photos of the channel's function following a significant storm.

Mark Stinson, MassDEP, addressed the Commission and advised on the preferred permit form for issuance of the OOC.

**Motion:** Vice-Chair Doroski moved to issue Order of Conditions to DEP File #288-0493 to MassDOT for channel restoration to address flooding at the existing culvert at 315 Amherst Road with special conditions as discussed during the hearing. Commissioner Rosenfeld seconded the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) Commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

**Agenda Item #4 — Public Hearing: Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) filed by Big Y Foods, Inc. The area of delineation is located at the property identified as Map 14 Parcel 67. It is adjacent to 44 Willimansett St in the Big Y Plaza.**

The applicant's engineering consultant, Guy A. Hesketh of Chief Engineer F. A. Hesketh & Associates Inc, and wetland consultant Chris Allen of LandTech Consultants Inc.

Guy Hesketh explained that the property inclusive of 44 Willimansett Street was delineated in the 1990s prior to development of the Big Y Plaza currently at the location. The location of

interest was not developed as anticipated and was currently undeveloped. Given the amount of time passed, there was interest to reaffirm the site's delineation.

Vice-Chair Doroksi attended the site visit and generally agreed with the delineation as provided.

Vice-Chair Doroski discussed the definition of a 'pond' with Mark Stinson, MassDEP. A water body was present on site and there was some discussion about its designation. Guy Hesketh and Chris Allen responded that the ponded area had not altered over the years and was likely an excavation hole. It was not a pond as it was undersized and its bank uneven. Regardless, the water body was inside a mapped Bordering Vegetated Wetland. Thus, the location was jurisdictional.

Vice-Chair Doroski noted an error in the scaling of the plan sets. Guy Hesketh responded that corrected plans would be provided.

Commissioner Schoendorf asked why a new delineation was performed. Administrator Cornell responded that the site's previous delineation was performed almost 30 years ago. An updated delineation would provide for accuracy of present conditions and conformity with current standards.

Commissioners generally supported that a peer-review of the delineation was not required and discussed the language needed to issue approval.

**Motion:** Commissioner Davis moved to find that the delineation was performed in accordance with appropriate regularity manuals and moved to find that the mapped Resource Areas were accurate *and* moved to issue Order of Resource area Delineation to DEP File #288-0494 for property adjacent to 44 Willimansett Street, Map 14 Parcel 67, with findings as discussed during the public hearing. Commissioner Dennis seconded the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) Commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

Vice-Chair Doroski left the meeting at 7:19 PM.

#### **Agenda Item #5 — Right of First Refusal – Lithia Springs Rd (Map 58, Parcel 23)**

Administrator Cornell explained that notice has been received for a land swap between Lithia Springs Road (Map 58, Parcel 23) and 12 Lithia Springs Road. The land transfer exchanged a small portion of property to enable a preferred building footprint at 12 Lithia Spring Road. Notice of the sale was required as a portion of the land was enrolled in the Chapter 61A tax classification which enabled the Town to acquire the property through its right of First Refusal if the property was sold or its use changed. The transfer sought to swap relatively small portions of land and was not recommended for acquisition.

The Commission took no action on the right of first refusal to acquire the property.

#### **Agenda Item #6 — Administrator's Report**

Administrator Cornell detailed the following items:

- *Woodbridge Street Property* - The Commission had previously released OOC 288-199 for exploratory well drilling on Woodbridge St with the understanding that the Town may acquire the property. However, the property back tax had recently been paid so the Town was no longer seeking foreclosure.
- *Public Notice* - Eversouce sent notification of maintenance work within existing utility right-of-ways in the Chicopee Falls area.
- *Lithia Springs* - Work permitted by the Commission has been completed.
- *Grant Activity* – \$1.2 million had been awarded through the MVP Action Grant for Pearl St. culvert restoration and \$20k had been awarded through the Community Forest Plan Challenge Grant for other work.
- *Subcommittee Updates* – The *Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB)* Subcommittee was expected to meet on September 4, prior to the next Conservation Commission Meeting.
- *Camera Use Policy* – Discussion of the policy was tentatively scheduled for September 4. Chair Tolopko recommended delaying discussion until after the scheduled Town-wide training on September 5.
- *Farm License Agreement* – Discussion of the agreement was tentatively scheduled for the meeting of September 4. Chair Tolopko questioned if discussion was premature as additional research was needed.
- *Upcoming Meeting Schedule* – The next meeting was scheduled for September 4. The following meeting of September 18 needed to be rescheduled to September 11 or 25.

### **Agenda Item #3 — Minutes**

Draft minutes of the July 10 and July 24 meeting were sent to the Commission for review. Commissioner Rosenfeld noted a grammatical error in the July 10 draft minutes.

**Motion:** Commissioner Schoendorf moved to approve the July 10 meeting minutes as revised. Commissioner Rosenfeld seconded the motion. Four (4) out of Five (5) Commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote. Chair Tolopko abstained from the vote.

**Motion:** Commissioner Davis moved to approve the July 24 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rosenfeld seconded the motion. Four (4) out of Five (5) Commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote. Commissioner Schoendorf abstained from the vote.

### **Agenda Item #7 — Other New Business**

There was no new business to discuss.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion:** Commissioner Rosenfeld moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

**Appendix**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
Zoom Attendance Sheet	Attached
NOI Application	Conservation Files
NOI Presentation	Attached
ANRAD Application	Conservation Files
Notice of Intended Sale	Conservation Files

## Attendee Report

Report Generated: 10/17/2024 10:49

Topic	Webinar ID	Actual Duration (minutes)	Unique Viewers	Total Users
Conservation Commission Host Details	875 8663 6107	147	10	35

Attended	User Name (Original Name)	Join Time	Leave Time	Time in Session (minutes)
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Yes	Rebekah Cornell (Town of South Hadley 3)	8/21/2024 17:44	8/21/2024 20:10	147
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## Panelist Details

Attended	User Name (Original Name)	Join Time	Leave Time	Time in Session (minutes)
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Yes	Kathy	8/21/2024 17:58	8/21/2024 20:10	133
Yes	Terry	8/21/2024 17:57	8/21/2024 20:10	134
Yes	Tom	8/21/2024 18:01	8/21/2024 20:10	130
Yes	Neva Tolopko (Neva)	8/21/2024 17:48	8/21/2024 20:10	143
Yes	Mark Stinson	8/21/2024 18:06	8/21/2024 18:06	1
Yes	Mark Stinson	8/21/2024 18:39	8/21/2024 18:40	1
Yes	Mark Stinson	8/21/2024 18:57	8/21/2024 19:12	16
Yes	Billie Li (She/Her) MassDOT	8/21/2024 18:07	8/21/2024 18:41	34
Yes	Jess (Jessica)	8/21/2024 18:07	8/21/2024 20:10	124
Yes	Chris Allan	8/21/2024 18:41	8/21/2024 19:18	38
Yes	April	8/21/2024 17:58	8/21/2024 19:19	81
Yes	Colleen	8/21/2024 17:54	8/21/2024 20:10	137
Yes	Guy Hesketh	8/21/2024 18:43	8/21/2024 19:18	36

## Attendee Details

Attended	User Name (Original Name)	Join Time	Leave Time	Time in Session (minutes)
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Yes	Neal	8/21/2024 17:46	8/21/2024 17:55	9
Yes	Neal OMeara	8/21/2024 17:55	8/21/2024 20:00	125
Yes	Kathy	8/21/2024 17:58	8/21/2024 17:58	1
Yes	Julia	8/21/2024 17:57	8/21/2024 17:59	3
Yes	Julia	8/21/2024 18:01	8/21/2024 18:01	1

Yes	Julia	8/21/2024 18:02	8/21/2024 19:18	77
Yes	John Harrison	8/21/2024 18:11	8/21/2024 18:11	1
Yes	John Harrison	8/21/2024 18:11	8/21/2024 18:30	19
Yes	John Harrison	8/21/2024 18:30	8/21/2024 18:30	1
Yes	John Harrison	8/21/2024 18:30	8/21/2024 20:10	101
Yes	Mark Stinson	8/21/2024 17:57	8/21/2024 18:06	9
Yes	Mark Stinson	8/21/2024 18:07	8/21/2024 18:39	33
Yes	Mark Stinson	8/21/2024 18:40	8/21/2024 18:57	17
Yes	Mark Stinson	8/21/2024 19:12	8/21/2024 19:32	21
Yes	Billie Li (She/Her) MassDOT	8/21/2024 18:01	8/21/2024 18:07	6
Yes	Chris Allan	8/21/2024 17:51	8/21/2024 18:41	51
Yes	Chris Allan	8/21/2024 19:18	8/21/2024 19:18	1
Yes	Paul Wanat	8/21/2024 17:56	8/21/2024 19:23	87
Yes	Guy Hesketh	8/21/2024 17:52	8/21/2024 18:43	51
Yes	Guy Hesketh	8/21/2024 19:18	8/21/2024 19:19	1
Yes	Marc Desrosiers's iPhone	8/21/2024 17:52	8/21/2024 19:24	92

# South Hadley Route 116 at Old County Road

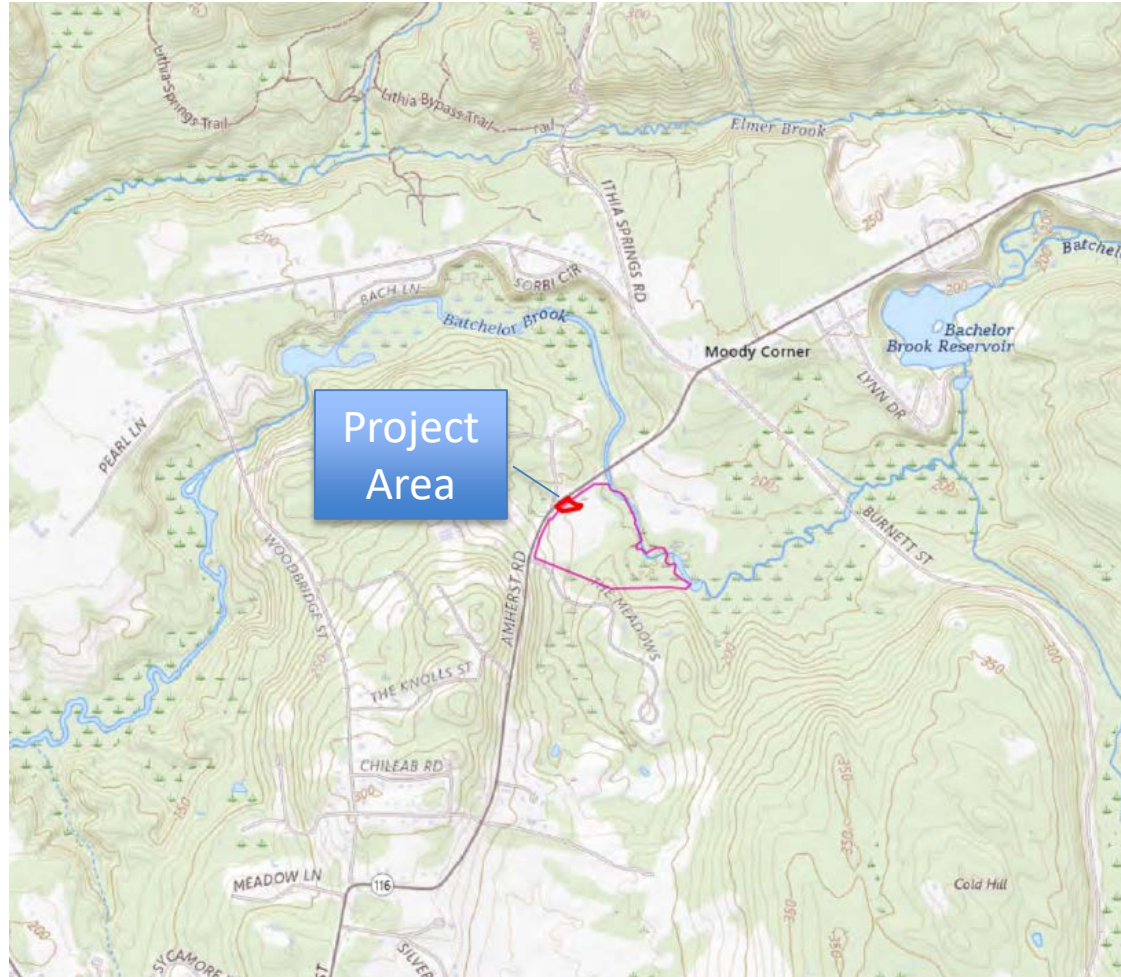
South Hadley Conservation  
Commission Hearing

8/21/24

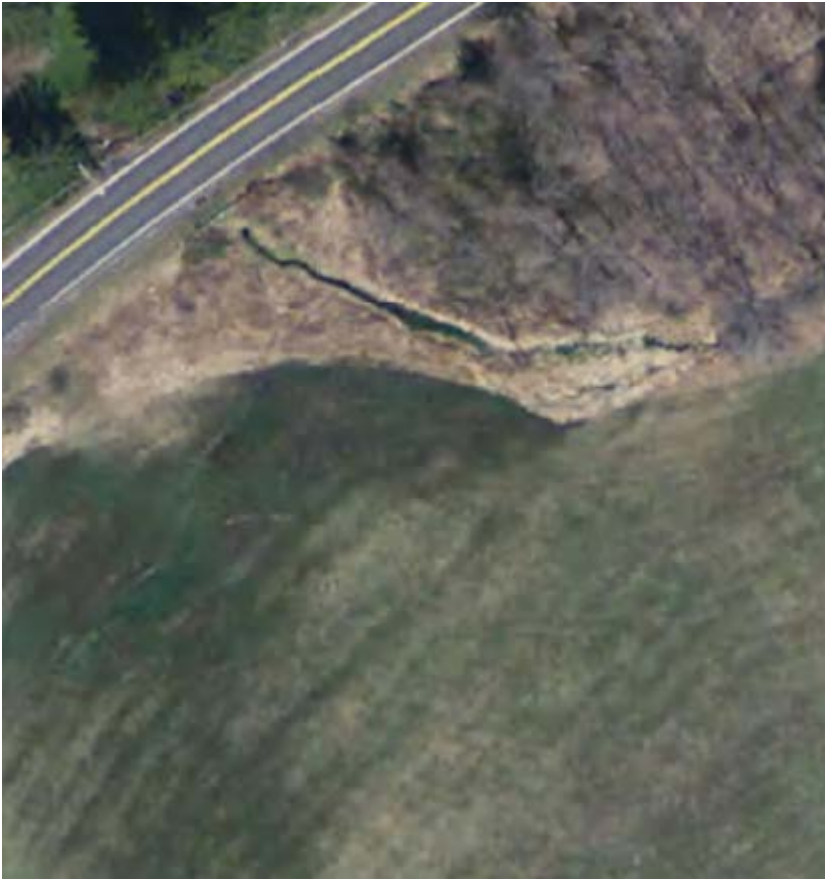
# Project Background

- Problem: backwatering and flooding of Route 116 (Amherst Road) and abutters
- Solution: Restoration of downstream channel within MassDOT drainage easement
  - Restoring functions and values of the historic channel

# Project Location



# Historical and Current Conditions



2013



2023

# Current Conditions (April 2024)



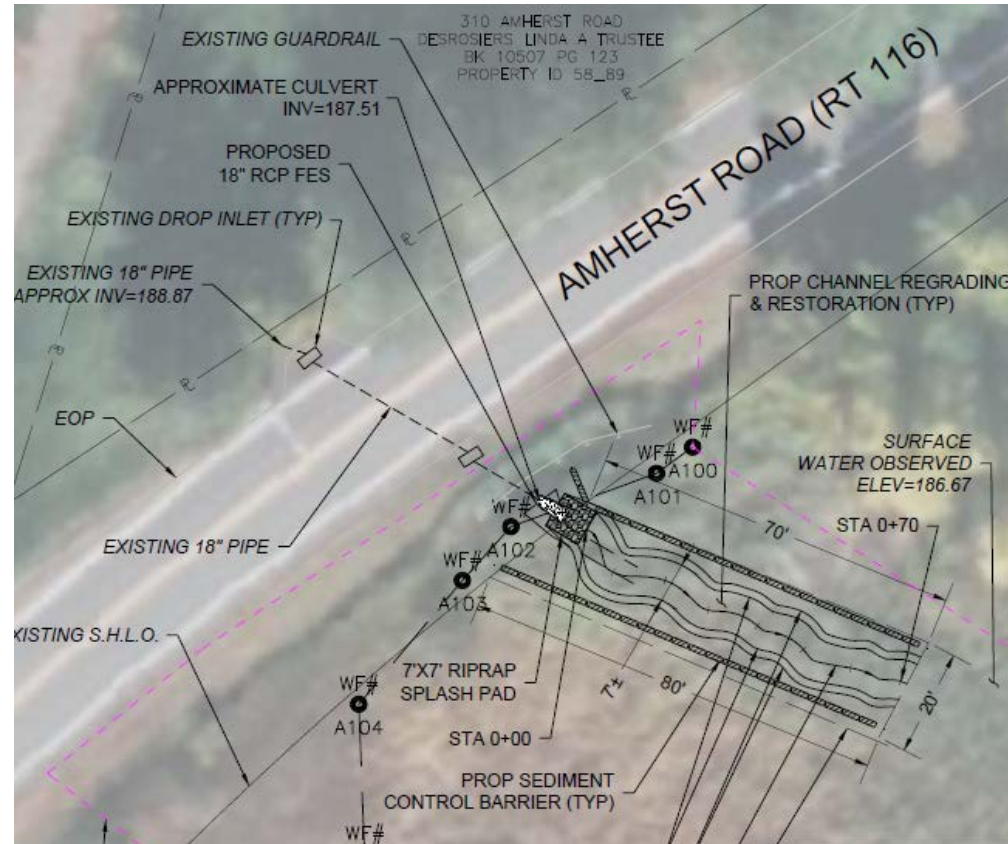
Facing West



Facing Southwest

# Proposed Work

- Re-establish stream channel
  - Excavate historic thalweg
  - Establish banks
- 7x7 ft splash pad at outlet to dissipate energy
- 18-inch flared end section added to culvert
- Sediment and erosion controls



# Resource Area Impacts

Resource Area	Activity Type	Impacts	Total	Conversion of BVW to Bank
Bordering Vegetated Wetlands	Temporary Impacts	250 sqft	1,050 sqft	94 linear feet
	Permanent Impacts	800 sqft		
Bank	Temporary Impacts	34 linear feet	48 linear ft	
	Permanent Impacts	14 linear feet		
Buffer Zone	Temporary Impacts	30 sqft	30 sqft	N/A

# Regulatory Compliance

- Ecological Restoration Limited Project
- 310 CMR 10.53(4)(e)(5): Other Restoration Projects
- primary purpose is to restore the natural capacity of a wetland resource area to protect and sustain the interests identified in the WPA
  - flood control
  - storm damage prevention.

# Maintenance

- Continued maintenance beyond the life of this OOC

<i>Stormwater Feature</i>	<i>Potential Maintenance Actions</i>	
<i>Outlet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Clear inlet and remove and properly dispose of sediment, trash, leaf litter, debris, and vegetation</i></li> <li>• <i>Repair or replace structural components</i></li> <li>• <i>Repair damaged or eroded areas</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Provide or rehabilitate erosion control at the outlet</i></li> <li>• <i>Regrade and replace the channel materials</i></li> <li>• <i>Remove woody growth</i></li> <li>• <i>Stabilize or reconstruct eroded areas</i></li> <li>• <i>Treat invasive plants according to MassDOT Vegetation Management Plan</i></li> </ul>
<i>Drainage Channel and Easement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Remove and properly dispose of accumulated material (e.g., sediment, trash, leaf litter, debris)</i></li> <li>• <i>Mow vegetated areas</i></li> <li>• <i>Stabilize or reconstruct eroded areas</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Remove woody growth</i></li> <li>• <i>Treat invasive plants according to MassDOT Landscape Design Section</i></li> </ul>

# Summary

- Project results in conversion of BVW to Stream
- Conversion restores the channel's natural capacity to store flood water and prevent storm damage
- Impacts to BVW and Bank were minimized while meeting the Project's intended purpose and need

# Questions?

Billie Li

District Environmental Engineer

[Billie.m.li@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:Billie.m.li@dot.state.ma.us)

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