

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gardner Planning Board

FROM: Eric M. Bernardin, P.E., Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.

DATE: May 26, 2020

RE: Proposed Gardner Elementary School – Project Summary

Project Overview

The Gardner Elementary School project consists of the construction of a new 147,120 square foot elementary school adjacent to the existing Gardner High School and Middle School campus. The school will serve grades pre-kindergarten through fourth grade serving a total of 925 full-time students and 80 part-time student. Site access will be provided off of Pearl Street and connection between the new school and the existing High School and Middle School campus will be provided by connecting the new driveway to the High School site near Catherine Street. Parking is proposed for approximately 200 vehicles. On behalf of the City of Gardner, applicant and owner, Fuss & O'Neill is seeking Definitive Site Plan approval and waiver to the dimensional requirement for building height.

Permitting

In addition to seeking Definitive Site Plan approval, permit applications for the following have been submitted for review and approval from other agencies:

- Notice of Intent for wetlands approval subject to 310 CMR 10.00
- Environmental Notification Form (ENF) in accordance with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)
- Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) in accordance with Section 404(e) of the Clean Water Act

An electronic copy of the ENF was sent to the Planning Board on April 24, 2020 which included the following supporting documents:

- Site Plans
- Site Photographs
- Stormwater Management Report
- Wetland Report
- Wildlife Habitat Evaluation
- FEMA Flood Mapping
- NOI Circulation List & Abutters Information
- Culvert Design Report
- Wetlands Mitigation Recommendations
- Geotechnical Report
- Schematic Design Layout
- Letters of Support
- Traffic Impact Study
- Historic Property Correspondence

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Stormwater

On-site post construction stormwater management was designed to meet the guidelines of the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook (Stormwater Handbook). The Stormwater Report includes a summary of the hydrologic analyses performed for pre- and post-construction conditions and description of how the proposed design conforms to the Standards.

Wetlands

Wetland Scientists from Lucas Environmental, LLC (LE) conducted site investigations at the site in October, November, and December 2019. Access to the project site is constrained by the presence of regulated wetland areas. The proposed project includes the replacement of one (1) existing culvert and the construction of two (2) new culverts. Impacts to wetland resource area by the overall project are limited to the three culvert crossing locations. A wetlands mitigation area approximately 10,000 square feet in size, is proposed to offset impacts to resources areas.

Culvert Crossings

Two (2) of the three (3) proposed culvert crossings span regulated waterways, Foster Brook (a perennial stream) and an unnamed intermittent stream. These culvert crossings are proposed as open-bottomed culverts which were designed in accordance with the Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards and USFS Stream Simulation Manual. A minimum span of 1.2 times the bankfull width at each stream crossing.

Traffic

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) for the proposed project was prepared by Fuss & O'Neill in April 2019. The TIS estimates that the proposed new school will generate 1,796 vehicle trips per day; 50 percent entering and 50 percent exiting. The AM peak period is estimated to generate 618 vehicle trips per day; 54 percent entering and 46 percent exiting. The PM peak period is estimated to generate 323 vehicle trips; 45 percent entering and 55 percent exiting.

Improvements along Pearl Street near the site access drive are proposed including the addition of a left turn lane for vehicles traveling eastwards to the site. A Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) will also be installed at the crosswalk where the new site driveway intersects Pearl Street. A multi-use path has been proposed along the entire length of the new site access drive to encourage multi-modal pedestrian and bicyclist travel through the site.

The ability to connect the new school site to the existing High School/Middle School campus will provide greater opportunity for all school age children to learn and play with one another. Various City departments including the Gardner School District, Fire Department, and Department of Public Works have written letters in support of this connection.

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Project Funding

The City has entered into a Project Funding Agreement with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and approximately \$49 million of the total project cost will be paid for with MSBA grant funding. The total project cost is approximately \$89.5 million.

Historic and Archaeological Resources

The project site is not located within a Historic District and there are no known historic structures or archaeological sites on the project site. The City of Gardner has consulted with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and sent notification of the proposed project to interested parties. No agency has commented on the potential for the site to contain historic or archaeological sites of significance.

c: Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent of Schools
Kristian Whitsett, Jones Whitsett Architects