



WalkBoston

January 22, 2007

Secretary Ian Bowles
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, MEPA Office
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Report
Osborne Hills, Salem, MA

EOEA # 13965

Dear Mr. Bowles:

WalkBoston is delighted to have the proponent of Osborne Hills in Salem respond positively to our comments on the ENF for this project. After addressing certain comments satisfactorily in the DEIR, the proponent has modified aspects of the plan to incorporate these suggestions.

We would like to take this opportunity to review our comments and refine the observations in view of the ENF responses from the proponent. We request that the proponent respond to these issues as described below:

- A. WalkBoston's comment no. 1 in the ENF has been satisfactorily answered. The proponent will be constructing sidewalks on both sides of all internal roadways – a commendable and very useful incorporation of physical facilities that will provide significant safety and convenience for pedestrians living in the community. We are very happy that this change was made by the proponent.
- B. WalkBoston's comment no. 2 in the ENF suggested that on-site trails currently planned to be dead end should loop back into the path network. There are three such locations: Two are in the northeast corner of the site and connect to the site boundary and dead end there. A third loops into and through the grounds around the Water Storage Tank, ending at the site boundary. We continue to think it would improve the project to do so.
- C. WalkBoston's comment no. 3 in the ENF referred to trail connections between the on-site trails and paths or sidewalks outside the property. No connections are indicated, although we remain hopeful that, at minimum, a pedestrian connection might be feasible at the site boundary where a proposed roadway ends in a cul-de-sac that abuts the end of Barcelona Avenue.

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES MORE WALKABLE

Old City Hall | 45 School Street | Boston MA 02108 | T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | info@walkboston.org | www.walkboston.org

- D. WalkBoston's comment no. 4 in the ENF has been satisfactorily answered. The proponent will use the irregular site topography to make trails interesting and challenging.
- E. WalkBoston's comment no. 5 received a response that is discouraging. WalkBoston had hoped that on-site resident children might be able to walk to school – a feature that many suburban communities do not encourage. The response indicated that walking to school could not be accomplished because busing was likely to be available. Furthermore, Marlborough Road would have to be crossed by the children and the adjacent neighborhoods there are no sidewalks. We would hope that, the sidewalks being produced for the proponent's site may show the way toward a neighborhood sidewalk network that allows children to walk to school.
- F. WalkBoston's comment no. 6 did not receive a response in the DEIR. It suggested that the proponent try to show all pedestrian connections on the map as "actual" proposals rather than "potential." The DEIR shows pathways along the west property line and a path connection at the northeast corner of the site as "potential" additions to the network. Both would add significantly to the ultimate network of paths and should be included in the build-out of this plan.
- G. WalkBoston's comment no. 7 in the ENF has been satisfactorily answered. Small footbridges will be constructed as needed for wetland crossings.
- H. WalkBoston's comment no. 8 in the ENF has been satisfactorily answered. The utility corridor is not a good alignment for walking paths.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this DEIR. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director

Robert Sloane
Senior Planner