

MassDOT DISTRICT 3

YEARLY OPERATIONAL PLAN

2026

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INTRODUCTION

This MassDOT District 3 Yearly Operational Plan (YOP) is being filed under the MassDOT Highway District 3 2026 – 2030 Vegetation Management Plan (VMP). As described in the VMP and herein, the goal of the 2026 YOP is to manage roadside vegetation in order to provide safe use of and access to roadways, sidewalks and facilities, and to preserve the integrity of highway infrastructure. Uncontrolled roadside vegetation can impede normal maintenance operations, obstruct motorists' line of vision, block safe access to roadways and sidewalks, and can cause damage to structures such as median barriers, pavements, shoulders, guard posts, drainage lines, and waterways. Uncontrolled invasive species exacerbate maintenance problems and cause degradation of rights-of-way (ROW) land and of abutting land.

The 2026 YOP for District 3 roadways will be for the treatment of problematic vegetation in the towns and locations shown on the maps in Appendix A.

TREATMENT PLAN

The District will be conducting a ROW spray targeting vegetation as described in the VMP and below for Zone I locations (primarily guardrail, median barrier, and utility structures). This treatment will be conducted in the towns listed in Table 1 and will comply with the District 3 2026-2030 Vegetation Management Plan per 333 CMR 11.00. Treatment for ROW vegetation will typically occur May – June but may be extended or adjusted as needed.

The District will also be treating invasive plants along roadsides with locations chosen based on need, resources and time. Treatment will be targeted to invasive plants only, primarily focusing on Japanese knotweed, Oriental bittersweet, and common reed. Locations will be primarily roadsides areas, fences, bridge abutments, and around utility structures. Treatment will include foliar spray and cut stem for woody species. Treatment period for foliage application of Japanese knotweed and other invasive species will typically be August – October. Cut stem treatment for woody species would occur from July – January.

Individual Supervising the Yearly Operational Plan

The District 3 individual supervising the implementation and oversight of the YOP work is:

Arthur Resca
Assistant Maintenance Engineer
Maintenance Department
499 Plantation Parkway, Worcester MA 01605
#774-535-1632

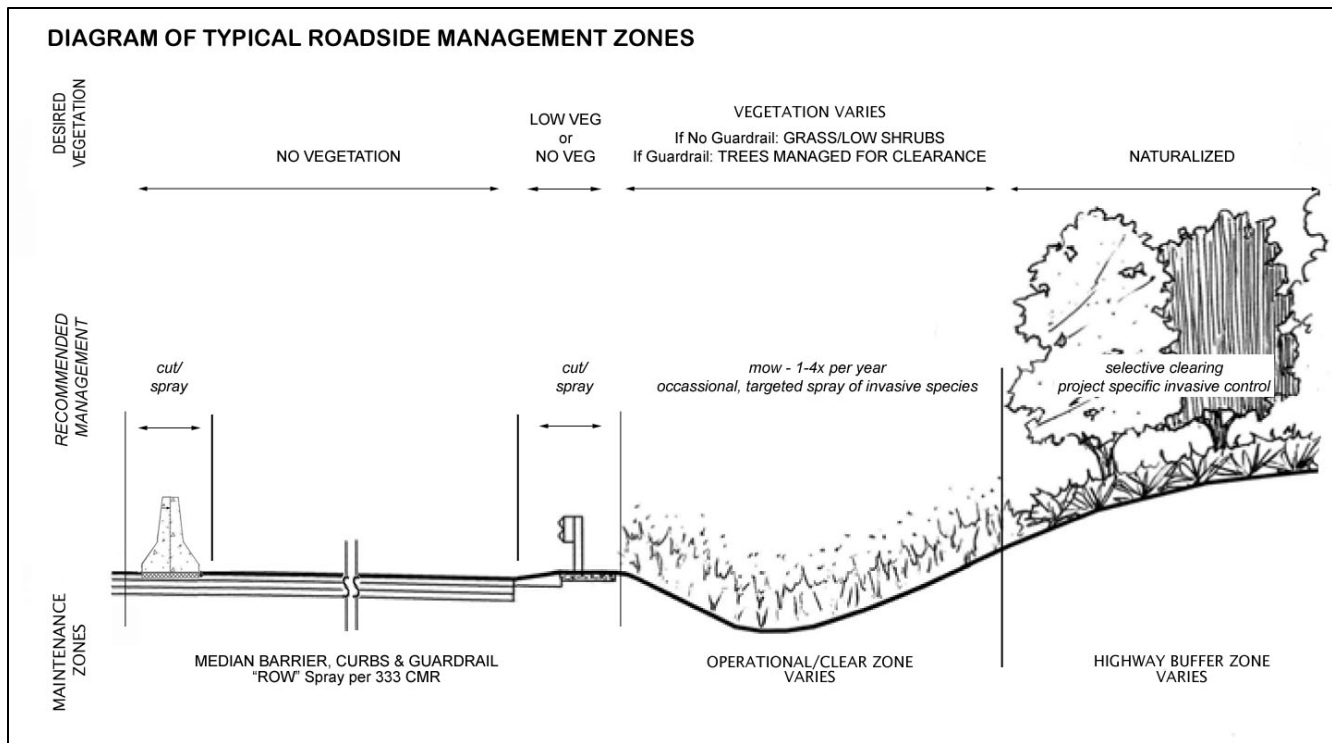
Contractor/Personnel Performing the Herbicide Treatments

As required by 333 CMR 11.00, all applicators on roadside rights-of-way must hold a valid MDAR pesticide applicators license and all work shall be directly supervised on site, as required by regulations, by an individual with Right-of-Way Certification (Category 40). In addition to the applicable rules and regulations, applicators will adhere to the operation guidelines of the VMP, as described below in this YOP, and as required by MassDOT specifications.

Contractors are to be determined. All herbicide applications will be conducted by contractors who meet the above qualifications.

GENERAL TARGET AREAS

As shown in the District 3 VMP, roadside vegetation management covers three primary zones: Zone I includes the roadway, curbs, medians, and guardrail; Zone II which consists primarily of the required Clear Zone adjacent to the roadway; and Zone III which is the naturalized edge of the ROW layout and which serves as a screen and buffer for the roadway. The diagram below illustrates the three zones and the typical recommended management to achieve the desired vegetation. Herbicide application in these zones for the purpose of routine maintenance of the roadway and associated structures is subject to 333 CMR 11.00 regulations and all requirements listed in this VMP and in the YOPs.



TARGET VEGETATION AND LOCATIONS

While all vegetation that is incompatible with the goals of the VMP will be targeted, some plants are more prevalent and more problematic along the roadside. Weeds that grow in the cracks of barriers, medians, and pavement are particularly problematic because they cannot be removed mechanically or manually. Safety is a significant concern due to high-speed traffic, and often lanes need to be closed to address these locations. These plants and locations will be a high priority target.

Tall invasive and aggressive plants along the guardrail will also be a high priority. Mugwort and sweet clover are particularly problematic because they grow tall and drape over the guardrail and into the roadway blocking visibility. Black locust, bittersweet, tree of heaven, Japanese knotweed, catalpa, and common reed are highly problematic species found growing between and behind the guardrail and along fences. These plants block visibility of sight distances and signage and can cause structural damage. They re-sprout and spread more vigorously when cut, becoming even more problematic and difficult to control.

Poison ivy is highly prevalent along roadways and sidewalks, presenting a safety hazard to both workers and the public. District 3 receives frequent calls from the public regarding poison ivy. Poison ivy also presents a problem for bridge inspections and when accessing utilities. Herbicide is the safest method for personnel to address poison ivy, and because poison ivy resprouts after cutting, it is the most effective method for eradication or containment.

Treatment limits are approximately 10 feet back from roadways, multi-use trails, and sidewalks. Treatment will be applied as required for safe operations, access to utilities and structures, and when requested by municipalities or the public.

METHODS

Mechanical Vegetation Management Techniques

The District's primary method of vegetation management is by mechanical methods, including mowing and line trimming of herbaceous material, tree trimming and removal, and brush cutting.

Herbicide Application Methods

For locations shown in the YOP maps, District 3 will primarily utilize foliar spray for all guardrail, curb and barrier treatment. Cut stem/stump methods may be used for instances where selective treatment is desired, such as to treat re-sprouting trees, shrubs or vines.

All equipment used for applications shall meet requirements as specified in the VMP and contract specifications.

Foliar treatments involve the application of approved herbicides and adjuvants diluted in water to the foliage and stems of the target vegetation. Low-pressure nozzles will be used to produce the largest possible droplet size and a drift control agent shall be added at the rate recommended on the label to keep spray drift to an absolute minimum. The herbicide solution is applied to lightly wet the target plant.

Foliar applications will take place when plants are in full leaf and actively growing and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

Targeted application may include cut stump or cut stem treatment of specific species that re-sprout and shall be with a portable pressurized canister or manually painted on the freshly cut surface of the remaining stump. Targeted application also includes foliar application to specific species of invasive plants such as Japanese knotweed.

Thermal Treatment

In 2026, the District will be experimenting with a thermal weed killer. The mechanism projects hot water at over 230 degrees to kill the above ground growth and "shock" the root systems. This method will be targeted to weeds in median barriers and other paved surfaces.

SENSITIVE AREAS AND MATERIALS

Rights-of-Way Sensitive Area Materials

The MDAR's Pesticide Bureau approves materials for use within Sensitive Areas and ROWs. For ROW treatment, the District will use only those chemicals listed on the Sensitive Areas Materials List, with the use restrictions shown for Sensitive Areas, and with label restrictions for all other areas. The materials are listed in Appendix B and on the MDAR website: www.mass.gov/info-details/rights-of-way-sensitive-area-materials-list.

Tables 1-5 - Material Applications

Table 1 - Tank Mix for Curb, Cracks, Guardrails, Median Treatments (General Weed Control)			
Herbicides & Adjuvants	Active Ingredient	EPA Registration Numbers	Mix Concentration (per 100 gals. Water)
Rodeo	Glyphosate	62719-324	2-5%
Oust Extra	Sulfometuron Methyl and Metsulfuron-Methyl	352-622	10 oz (applied at a volume of 15-30 gals per acre)
Induce, Clean Cut, or equivalent surfactant			0.125% - 1%
Point Blank, Stay Put Plus or equivalent drift retardant			4-16 oz.

Table 2 - Tank Mix for Poison Ivy, Noxious and Invasive Species			
Herbicides & Adjuvants	Active Ingredient	EPA Registration Numbers	Mix Concentration (per 100 gals. Water)
Rodeo	Glyphosate	62719-324	2-5%
Escort XP	Metsulfuron-Methyl	352-439	1.25-4oz
Induce, Clean Cut, or equivalent surfactant			0.125% - 1%
Point Blank, Stay Put Plus or equivalent drift retardant			4-16 oz.

Table 3 - Tank Mix for Poison Ivy			
Herbicides & Adjuvants	Active Ingredient	EPA Registration Numbers	Mix Concentration (per 100 gals. Water)
Garlon 4 Ultra	Triclopyr	62719-527	2-4%
Induce, Clean Cut, or equivalent surfactant			0.125% - 1%
Point Blank, Stay Put Plus or equivalent drift retardant			4-16 oz.

Table 4 - Tank Mix for Low Volume Foliage Applications (mixed in water)			
Herbicides & Adjuvants	Active Ingredient	EPA Registration Numbers	Mix Concentration (per 100 gals. Water)
Rodeo	Glyphosate	62719-324	3-5%
Krenite	Fosamine	42750-247	6-10%
Escort XP	Metsulfuron-Methyl	352-439	1.25-4oz
Arsenal Powerline	Imazapyr	241-431	0.125%-.5%
Induce, Clean Cut, or equivalent surfactant			0.125% - 1%
Point Blank, Stay Put Plus or equivalent drift retardant			6-64 oz.

Table 5– Tank Mix for Cut Surface Treatment Applications			
Herbicides & Adjuvants	Active Ingredient	EPA Registration Numbers	Mix Concentration (per 100 gals. Water)
Rodeo	Glyphosate	62719-324	40-50%
Arsenal Powerline	Imazapyr	241-431	3%-5% (mixed with Accord Concentrate)
Carriers: Water or Windshield Washing Fluid			0.125% - 1%

Sensitive Area Procedures and Restrictions

Methods used to Delineate Sensitive Areas Adjacent to the ROW

Sensitive Areas are areas within rights-of-way in which public health, environmental or agricultural concerns warrant special protection to further minimize risks of unreasonable adverse effects. These areas shall be delineated.

Sensitive Areas are separated into two categories: areas that are visible and therefore readily identifiable in the field, and areas that are not visible and therefore not readily identifiable in the field.

Sensitive Areas that are visibly identifiable in the field include surface waters, wetlands, rivers, and agricultural and inhabited areas. Sensitive areas that are not readily identifiable in the field include public groundwater supplies, public surface water supplies, and private water supplies. These locations are derived from MassGIS data provided by the Department of Environmental Protection, Fish and Wildlife, and other state agencies and are shown on the maps.

Sensitive Areas requiring delineation in the field will either have steel reflective delineators bolted to the guardrail beam face to mark locations or reflectors glued to the top of the guardrail or median barrier.

Reflectors shall be as follows:

NO-SPRAY limits shall be indicated as BLUE delineators.

ALTERNATE YEAR SPRAY ZONES shall be delineated with ½-BROWN – ½-BLUE delineator signs.

Table 6 - Sensitive Area Restriction Guide (333 CMR 11.04)

SENSITIVE AREA	NO-SPRAY AREA	LIMITED USE AREA	WHERE IDENTIFIED
Wetlands and Water over Wetlands	Within 10 feet.	10 - 100 feet: 12 months must elapse between applications and herbicides are applied selectively by low pressure foliar techniques or by cut-stump applications.	YOP Maps and identify on site
Certified Vernal Pool	Within 10 feet.	10 feet to the outer boundary of any Certified Vernal Pool Habitat; 12 months must elapse between application; Selective low pressure, using foliar techniques or basal or cut-stump applications.	YOP Maps and identify on site
Public Ground Water Supply	Within 400 feet (Zone I)	Zone II or IWPA (Primary Recharge Area): 24 months must elapse between applications; applications shall be selective low pressure foliar techniques, basal or cut-stump.	YOP Maps and identify on site
Riverfront Areas	Within 10 feet from mean annual high water line.	10 feet from the mean annual high water line and the outer boundary of the Riverfront Area: 12 months must elapse between applications; applications shall be selective low pressure foliar, basal or cut- stump.	YOP Maps and Identify on site
Agricultural & Inhabited Areas	N/A	0 - 100 feet: 12 months must elapse between application; application shall be selective low pressure foliar, basal or cut-stump.	Identify on site.
State Listed Species Habitat	No application within habitat area except in accordance with a Yearly Operational Plan approved in writing by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.		YOP Maps
Private Water Supply	Within 50 feet	50 – 100 feet 24 months must elapse between applications; applications shall be selective low pressure foliar techniques, basal or cut- stump.	In YOP & well list and identify on site.
Public Surface Water Supply	Within 100 feet of any Class A public surface water source.	100 feet to the outer boundary of the Zone A; 24 months must elapse between applications; applications shall be selective low pressure foliar techniques, basal or cut- stump.	YOP Maps
	Within 10 feet of any tributary or associated surface water body located outside of the Zone A	10 feet to the outer boundary of the Zone A; 24 months must elapse between applications; applications shall be selective low pressure foliar techniques, basal or cut- stump.	YOP Maps
	Within 10 feet of any tributary or associated surface water body located outside of the Zone A	10 feet to the outer boundary of the Zone A; 24 months must elapse between applications; applications shall be selective low pressure foliar techniques, basal or cut- stump.	YOP Maps

Herbicide Handling, Mixing and Loading Procedures

All mixing and loading of herbicides will occur at the MassDOT depots. Herbicide will be mixed in amounts necessary to carry out that day's work. This will minimize waste and the need of excess handling. The spray vehicle will be equipped with a clipboard log of the herbicides on board and appropriate spill kits.

Major Spills and Related Accidents - For the purpose of this VMP, major spills involve reportable quantities of hazardous materials as defined by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) 320 CMR 40.000. Related accidents include fire, poisoning and automobile accidents.

- a) Administer proper first aid and call an ambulance and/or Massachusetts Poison Information Center in cases involving injury due to poisoning.
- b) Call the police and/or fire department in cases involving automobile accidents or fire.
- c) If possible, control the spill by stopping the leak or source of spill.
- d) Confine the spread of liquids with a dike composed of soil or other absorptive materials.
- e) Call ChemTrec, Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau or chemical manufacturer for assistance (see phone listing below) if unable to handle the spill or the material is unfamiliar.
- f) Notify the DEP if water bodies are contaminated, and for releases or threatened releases of reportable quantities of hazardous material.
- g) Notify the District Hazardous Material Coordinator.
- h) Clean up spill:
 - 1) If the spill occurs in a public location, isolate the spill areas and deny unauthorized entry until cleanup is complete.
 - 2) Absorb spilled liquids with sand, absorptive clay, spill control gel, vermiculite, pet litter, sawdust or other absorptive material. Wear proper protective clothing and equipment.
 - 3) Sweep or shovel contaminated absorbent into a leak proof, sealable container for proper disposal.
 - 4) Dry herbicides, such as dust, granular and pellets can be directly swept or shoveled into leak proof sealable containers without absorptive materials.
 - 5) Neutralize contaminated area with hydrated lime, sodium hypochlorite (bleach), or soapy water. Never mix bleach and ammonia base products or a poisonous gas will result.
 - 6) Dispose of contaminated material at an approved location.

MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

Monitoring herbicide treatment and evaluating the effectiveness of that treatment will be conducted by the appropriate Area Foremen in coordination with District Environmental staff knowledgeable about plant identification. Treatment will be adjusted as necessary with the goal of minimizing herbicide use while still achieving effective control.

Planning and evaluation requirements will include the following:

- 1) Prior to treatment, roadways shall be inspected to assess locations and target vegetation. Foremen will work with trained Environmental staff to identify priority locations and routes. Locations requiring treatment specific to targeting invasive species (i.e., knotweed, phragmites, black locust) will be noted.
- 2) Contract work shall be coordinated by the Area Foreman and appropriately trained staff to ensure herbicide application follows the appropriate regulatory requirements, the contract specifications, and the Yearly Operational Plan. The Area Foreman and/or staff shall work with the MDAR ROW Coordinator for all regulatory oversight of herbicide use.
- 3) MassDOT Herbicide Use Reports shall be submitted by the contractor within 2 weeks after treatment. Herbicide Use Reports will be kept on file by District 3.
- 4) Following a sufficient period after herbicide treatment, target routes will be evaluated by the Area Foreman or designated individual as to the effectiveness of treatment. Written evaluations will include a general description of the overall management of target routes and/or species, effectiveness of herbicides used, and observations of nearby sensitive resource areas, noting impacts if any. These notes will be incorporated into the Annual Vegetation Management Evaluation Summary described below.
- 5) District 3 will hold an annual YOP evaluation meeting which will include the Assistant Maintenance Engineer, Area Foremen, and Environmental staff to assess their Vegetation Management Program. The evaluation meeting shall take place after a sufficient period following completion of all herbicide treatment activities for that year and will evaluate and assess the overall management of target species or plants in each treatment area or route for both types of program treatment. It will assess the ROW (Zone 1) treatments to determine if chemicals need to be modified for effectiveness, reduced, or other actions taken, and it will assess management of targeted invasive species to determine a treatment plan for the following year based on effectiveness of treatment and priorities.

In addition, the meeting will evaluate and assess:

- a. Amount of herbicide applied and recommended changes
- b. Impacts related to weather
- c. Sensitive area impacts
- d. Comments received from the public
- e. Overall program implementation including suggested changes

This annual evaluation of this vegetation management program will result in the development of an Annual Vegetation Management Evaluation Summary. This document will be used to inform the next YOP, and the results of the yearly evaluations shall be summarized for the next VMP, should one be developed for MDAR approval. Meeting minutes will include the above information, data and discussion points, and will include comparisons to previous years' information. Recommendations on location and use will be reflected in next year's YOP as applicable. All documentation and evaluation will be completed by District 3 where it will be retained for a minimum of five years.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND POINTS OF CONTACT

In the event of a spill or emergency, information on safety precautions and clean up procedures may be gathered from the following sources:

Herbicide Label.....Herbicide Container

Herbicide Fact Sheet Links..... Appendix B

Manufacturers:

Dow AgroSciences..... (517) 636 4400

DuPont..... (800) 441-3637

Corteva Agriscience LLC (800) 992-5994

Monsanto..... (314) 694-4000

BASF..... (800) 832-4357

NuFarm USA..... (630) 455-2000

MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) (617) 626-1700

MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Incident Response Unit 1 (888) 304-1133

MA Department of Environmental Protection Central Regional Office (508) 792-7650

ChemTrec (800) 424-9300

MA Poison Control Center (800) 222-1222

Environmental Protection Agency Pesticide Hotline (800) 858-7378

MA Department of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health,
Environmental Toxicology Program..... (617) 624-5757

District 3 Headquarters (Worcester)..... (508) 929-3800

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Towns and Routes

Table 1. Towns and Routes for 2026 ROW Treatment

ROW treatment for guardrails, back of curb, sidewalks, and other Zone 1 (ROW will take place in the following municipalities as feasible pending time and resources. Mile marker points and spray restrictions are shown on the maps in Appendix E.

Worcester

I-190
I-290
Route 20
Route 146

Millbury

Route 20
Route 146
Route I-90

Table 2. Towns and Routes for 2026 Invasive Plant Management

Treatment targeting invasive plants will be continued from past treatment in the municipalities listed below. Additional locations throughout the district will be added based on prioritization of the need and available resources.

Franklin: Route 140
Holden: Route 122A
Leicester: Route 9
Millbury: Route 20, 146, I-90, and M-Route.
Northborough: Route 20 and 9
Oxford: I-395
Paxton: Route 122
Sutton: Route 146 and M-Route
Rutland: Route 122 and 122A
Shrewsbury: Route 20 and 9
Sturbridge: Route 20 and 131
Uxbridge: Route 146
Webster: I-395
West Boylston: Route 12
Westborough, Southborough, Framingham and Natick: Route 9
Worcester: I-190, I-290, Routes 146, 20, 122, and 122A

Appendix B - MDAR Sensitive Materials Link

The List of Materials approved for Sensitive Areas by MDAR can be found online. The list includes links to the fact sheets for the active ingredients and for the products. The list is available at:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rights-of-way-sensitive-area-materials-list>

Appendix C – District 3 Vegetation Management Plan

www.mass.gov/lists/miscellaneous-publications.

Appendix D– Spray Location Maps

Maps are available online at: www.mass.gov/lists/miscellaneous-publications.

Hardcopy maps are available from the District upon request.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs



Department of Agricultural Resources

225 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772

www.mass.gov/agr



Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Rebecca L. Tepper
Secretary

Ashley E. Randle
Commissioner

NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of the **Rights of Way Management Regulations, 333 CMR 11:00**, in order to apply herbicides to control vegetation along rights of way, a 5 year Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and a Yearly Operational Plan (YOP) must be approved by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). Therefore, notice of receipt of a YOP and procedures for public review is hereby given as required by Section 11.06 (3).

A Yearly Operational Plan (YOP) has been submitted for: MDOT D3

This plan has been prepared by and submitted to the Department by: Angela Schofield, MassDot, District 3- Highway

Areas identified in the YOP as locations where treatment of Rights of Way with herbicides will be carried out in calendar year 2026 are: State owned highways throughout District 3

Public Review

The YOP may view at MDAR's website at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/rights-of-way-vegetation-management-vmps-yops-and-notices>

MDAR in particular seeks the verification of sensitive area locations reported in the Yearly Operational Plan (YOP). The Department itself has a limited ability to survey the geography, land use, and the water supplies in all the communities through which the rights of way are located. Municipalities, however, have most of this information readily available, and the particular knowledge with which to better certify the sensitive areas in their communities. Therefore, the Department requests, and urges, the assistance of the "affected" municipality in reviewing the completeness and accuracy of the maps contained in the submitted document. MDAR has established the following procedures for this review.

Yearly Operational Plans (YOP) and a copy of this notice will be sent by the applicant to the Conservation Commission, Board of Health (or designated health agent), and to the head of government.

(Mayor, City Manager, Chair of the Board of Selectmen) of the municipality where herbicides are to be applied along the rights of way during the calendar year 2026. Municipal agencies and officials will have forty-five (45) days following receipt of the YOP to review the maps contained in the document that indicate the location of "sensitive areas not readily identifiable in the field" for inaccuracies and omissions. "Sensitive areas" will be defined as in Section 11.02.

Municipal agencies and officials are requested to forward the YOP to other appropriate official(s) in their municipality qualified to certify the accuracy of sensitive area locations as indicated on the maps. The maps should be "corrected" and returned to the applicant, also a copy of the maps with these corrections indicated should be sent to MDAR to the address listed below, within the forty-five day review period. If the city or town needs more time to carry out this review, it should send a written request for an extension to MDAR and cite why there is a "good cause" for requesting additional time.

All corrections will be required to be made by the applicant, and corrected maps sent back to the city/town before the YOP can be considered "approved" by the Department for vegetation maintenance in that municipality. Any dispute on the part of the applicant regarding corrections made by municipal authorities should be indicated in writing to the Department and to the city/town which requested the disputed changes within (15) fifteen days of receipt of the request. The Department will decide whether or not YOP should be approved with or without the requested changes. MDAR will consider the "final approval" of a YOP individually for the municipality.

The final (21) twenty-one days of the public review period can serve concurrently to provide public notification as required by section 11.07 of the Rights of Way Management regulations, if the applicant has an approved VMP and if all the requisite city/town offices which have received copies of the YOP have completed their review and corrections have been duly made by the applicant and approved by the Department.

A failure by the city/town to respond to the applicant's submission of the YOP within the forty-five day public review period will be considered by MDAR to indicate agreement by municipal officials with the sensitive area demarcations as provided by the applicant in their YOP.

Any questions or comments on the information provided in this Notice and the procedures established for the municipal review as outlined above, should be addressed to:

Clayton Edwards
Right of Way Program
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Pesticide Bureau
225 Turnpike Rd., 3rd Floor
Southborough, MA 01772
Clayton.L.Edwards@mass.gov

Any additional questions or comments on any information provided as part of the proposed YOP should be addressed in writing to:

Angela Schofield
MassDot, District 3- Highway
Project Development, Assistant Environmental Review Engineer
499 Plantation St., Worcester, MA, 01605
Angela.C.Schofield@dot.state.ma.us

A copy should be sent to the Right of Way program at the above address.

COMMENT PERIOD ENDS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS (5pm), August 21, 2026