

Environmental Justice Screening Form

Project Name	Jackstraw Brook Culvert Improvements & Stream Restoration
Anticipated Date of MEPA Filing	July/August 2025 – Anticipate submitting a Notice of Ecological Restoration
Proponent Name	Town of Westborough
Contact Information (e.g., consultant)	Jeff Murawski jmurawski@westboroughma.gov (508)366-3076
Public website for project or other physical location where project materials can be obtained (if available)	Refer to the Westborough Engineering Projects webpage for project information.
Municipality and Zip Code for Project (if known)	Westborough, MA 01581
Project Type* (list all that apply)	Ecological Restoration; Resiliency
Is the project site within a mapped 100-year FEMA flood plain? Y/N/unknown	Yes
Estimated GHG emissions of conditioned spaces (click here for GHG Estimation tool)	N/A

Project Description

<p>1. Provide a brief project description, including overall size of the project site and square footage of proposed buildings and structures if known.</p> <p>This project continues the Town's efforts to improve conditions in the Jackstraw Brook watershed by advancing stream crossing improvements where a complex culvert network of 11 culvert pipes of varying condition is located within the Cedar Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Jackstraw Brook, a coldwater fishery, is identified in the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan as an important wildlife corridor that will benefit from improvements to passage. By addressing the frequency and extent of flooding within this flood hazard area, the project reduces the vulnerability of the Morse Street well and Hopkinton Road well to loss of function. It also decreases threats to the quality of water in the brook and underlying aquifers supplying two of the town's drinking water wells. The goal of this project is to replace two culverts on Upton Road and Hopkinton Road (Route 135) consistent with the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards and realign a portion of Jackstraw Brook to its historical location west of Upton Road. Options under consideration include excavating and removing a portion of Morse Street along with a culvert carrying an adjacent intermittent stream to allow for ecological restoration of Jackstraw Brook and provide additional floodplain volume.</p>
<p>2. List anticipated MEPA review thresholds (301 CMR 11.03) (if known)</p> <p>The project exceeds the following MEPA review thresholds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands, Waterways and Tidelands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ENF and Mandatory EIR

- **301 CMR 11.03(3)(a)(1)(a)** - Alteration of one or more acres of bordering vegetated wetlands
- **ENF and Other MEPA Review if the Secretary So Requires**
 - **301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(1)(b)** - Alteration of 500 or more linear feet of bank along an inland bank
 - **301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(1)(c)** - Alteration of 1,000 or more sf of outstanding resource waters
 - **301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(1)(f)** - Alteration of ½ or more acres of any other wetlands
- **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern**
 - **ENF and Other MEPA Review if the Secretary So Requires**
 - **301 CMR 11.03(11)(b)** - Any project of ½ or more acres within a designated ACEC

This project seeks to qualify in its entirety as an Ecological Restoration Project, meeting the requirements set forth in 301 CMR 11.01(2)(b)(4), and therefore we anticipate the proposed project shall not be required to undergo MEPA review.

3. List all anticipated state, local and federal permits needed for the project (if known)

Agency	Filings/Approvals
Local	
Town of Westborough Conservation Commission	Notice of Intent (NOI)
Town of Westborough	No-Rise Certification for Floodways
State	
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs – Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office	Notice of Ecological Restoration Project
Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)	Project Notification Form (PNF) - <i>submitted May 2025</i>
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)	401 MassDEP Water Quality Certification
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	Chapter 85 Bridge Review
Federal	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Pre-Construction Notification (PCN)
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Letter of Map Revision (LOMR)

4. Identify EJ populations and characteristics (Minority, Income, English Isolation) within 5 miles of project site (can attach map identifying 5-mile radius from [EJ Maps Viewer](#) in lieu of narrative)

Census Tract	Block Group	Municipality	EJ Criteria	Within 1 mile	Within 5 miles
3201.07	2	Hopkinton	Minority		X
3213.02	2	Marlborough	Minority		X
3214	2	Marlborough	Minority		X
3851.01	1	Ashland	Minority		X

3851.02	3	Ashland	Minority		X
7391.02	2	Shrewsbury	Minority		X
7391.02	1	Shrewsbury	Minority		X
7394.01	1	Shrewsbury	Minority		X
7394.01	2	Shrewsbury	Minority		X
7394.01	3	Shrewsbury	Minority		X
7423	5	Westborough	Minority	X	
7424.01	1	Westborough	Minority	X	
7424.01	2	Westborough	Minority	X	
7424.02	3	Westborough	Minority		X
7424.02	2	Westborough	Minority		X
7612	1	Westborough	Minority		X
7612	2	Westborough	Minority and income	X	
7612	3	Westborough	Minority		X

Refer to the attachment for a map identifying EJ populations and Characteristics.

5. Identify any municipality or census tract meeting the definition of “vulnerable health EJ criteria” in the [DPH EJ Tool](#) located in whole or in part within a 1 mile radius of the project site

Within 1 mile of the project site, Westborough meets the definition of vulnerable health EJ criteria for childhood blood lead and low birth weight. Within 1 mile of the project site, the following census tracts meet the definition of vulnerable health EJ criteria for childhood blood lead: 7423 and 7612. Within 1 mile of the project site, the following census tract meets the definition of vulnerable health EJ criteria for low birth weight: 7612.

6. Identify potential short-term and long-term environmental and public health impacts that may affect EJ Populations and any anticipated mitigation

It is anticipated there will be adverse short-term impacts due to construction, including a temporary increase in GHG emissions associated with construction equipment. Best management practices, including construction phasing and the implementation of sedimentation and erosion controls, will be included in the planning and design of the project (as required) to minimize and mitigate potential adverse short-term environmental impacts that may affect EJ Populations. In compliance with the Massachusetts Air Pollution Control Regulations, motor vehicles will be prohibited from idling in excess of five (5) minutes. This policy benefits environmental and public health by reducing the emission of toxic pollutants and greenhouse gases from motor vehicles. Unnecessary idling of construction vehicles will be prohibited.

No adverse long-term impacts on public health are anticipated that may affect EJ Populations. Long-term positive impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project including a more flood resilient culvert network, and the ecological restoration of Jackstraw Brook and its riparian area.

7. Identify project benefits, including “Environmental Benefits” as defined in 301 CMR 11.02, that may improve environmental conditions or public health of the EJ population

Improving the culvert network at the Upton Road and Morse Street intersection and Hopkinton Road will improve public safety and reduce vulnerability to flooding under current and future

climate change projections. Upton Road and Hopkinton Road (Route 135) are critical evacuation routes within the Town. Ensuring these routes remain passable by improving the culvert crossings is an important component of public safety. During the heavy rains of 2023, Morse Street was routinely closed due to water overtopping the road.

Improving the culvert network will have direct benefits for both the surrounding EJ population and downstream EJ populations and communities by reducing the extent of flooding within the area. Frequent overtopping of Morse Street and flood-related disruptions to the Town's water supply can lead to public health concerns and adversely impact quality of life for residents. It is anticipated that members of the EJ population will benefit from the resilience improvements associated with the project, including the health of the aquifer system which supplies water to the Town's public drinking water system as noted above. This project is a major step forward in alleviating flooding along Jackstraw Brook, improving conditions for the EJ population, and providing additional flood storage upstream (also within a mapped EJ population).

The proposed improvements to the Jackstraw Brook culvert network along Upton Road and Hopkinton Road (Route 135) will also provide multiple benefits to the environment, including improvements to habitat, bank stability, water quality, and mobility of fish and wildlife species in the local area.

8. Describe how the community can request a meeting to discuss the project, and how the community can request oral language interpretation services at the meeting . Specify how to request other accommodations, including meetings after business hours and at locations near public transportation.

An information meeting will be scheduled later this year to provide updates on the project. In the meantime, information about the project can be found at <https://www.westboroughma.gov/1394/Engineering-Projects> . The date and time for the information meeting will be shared through the Town's website and social media platform. Please contact Jeff Murawski at jmurawski@westboroughma.gov (508)366-3076 with any questions.

EJ Populations and Characteristics

