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Residents: Center may harm river

By **Katie Liesener**/ Daily News Staff
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WAYLAND -- Town officials and residents last week aired a laundry list of concerns about the planned Town Center development -- from the purported toxic effects of shoppers' tire dust to the appearance of buildings against the wild Sudbury River landscape.

"The goal of this is to have information in one collective place," environmental analyst Holly Johnson told an audience Thursday inside an abandoned office building at the Town Center site during a meeting with Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office as part of its environmental review.

The Environmental Policy Act office, an agency under the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, does not have power to approve or deny projects, but works with the public and developers to prevent potential environmental harm.

The agency only examines traffic, wetlands, wastewater and stormwater and proposed actions that require state permits.

Developer Twenty Wayland LLC submitted an environmental notification form to MEPA last month after its concept plans for a 372,500-square-foot Town Center development of retail, housing and municipal space tripped MEPA's thresholds for transportation and wetlands, waterways and tidelands.

"While we enjoyed the 80 percent approval (at Town Meeting), there are lots of challenges we still have to work through," said Frank Dougherty, project manager for Twenty Wayland LLC.

Residents and officials are worried about more nitrogen pouring into the Sudbury River just west of the property at routes 20 and 27.

"The Sudbury River is nitrogen-limited, which is very unusual for a freshwater wetlands system. There are generally not nitrogen controls in septic systems, and nitrogens are water soluble, so they all flow to the river," said Tom Sciacca, Wayland's representative on the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council.

Dougherty said he expects the development to contribute 45,000 gallons per day to the 65,000-gallons-per-day capacity of the site's wastewater treatment facility, which is owned and operated by the town. He also anticipates a subsurface disposal septic system will be necessary to discharge an additional 10,000 gallons per day.

"It (the plant) will not be expanded, from what we heard through the EPA," Dougherty said, though the plant may need upgrades to meet state guidelines on nitrogen and phosphorus controls.

Residents also wanted more information on how water use at the development would affect the town's water supply.

"There's a huge issue with summer usage and the load on our system. In fact the river water level dips dramatically at the end of the summer," Sciacca said.

Resident Molly Reed agreed, "I understand some people who live on hills can't flush their toilets all the time."

The other major topic of concern was traffic. The project is expected to generate almost 8,000 new vehicle trips per day, according to documents submitted to the state.

The developer has conducted three traffic studies to date and is working on a fourth to examine impact on side streets off Rte. 27. The developer's traffic consultant said mitigation could include widening of westbound lanes on Rte. 20 at the intersection with Rte. 27; a traffic signal at Concord Road and Rte. 27; a left- and right-turn lane into the Rte. 27 driveway; and right- and left-turn lanes into the Rte. 20 driveway.







Those at the meeting suggested the developer consider the destinations and origins of drivers in its current study, and ways bicyclists and pedestrians could reach the site from beyond busy Rte. 20.

As part of the MEPA process, the developer is now supposed to respond to state and public concerns in two drafts filed with MEPA. The drafts -- based on maximum build-out or a "worst-case scenario" -- will be made available to the public at the Wayland Library, Johnson said.

She said the ENF would be shared with the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to determine whether rare species may also be affected.

Johnson stressed to residents that the MEPA process does have certain limitations by law. For

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example, it cannot consider potential Town Center impacts taken together with the Wayland Commons Chapter 40B project, approved this year by the Zoning Board of Appeals and sited on both sides of the Town Center's Rte. 27 driveway.

In addition to MEPA, the developer is also working with Raytheon, the former owner of the property, on ways to coordinate construction with Raytheon's ongoing clean-up and environmental monitoring, and to identify which portions can be used for residential housing.

MEPA is seeking written comment from the public until Aug. 15 to inform the scope of work it will request for the developer's upcoming environmental reports. The secretary of environmental affairs will issue the scope of work by Aug. 25, Johnson said.

Public comments should be sent to Stephen R. Pritchard, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Attn: Holly Johnson, EOEPA No. 13844 Wayland Town Center, 100 Cambridge St., Suite 900, Boston MA 02114.

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Town Center's impact on Sudbury River to be examined

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