

Staff Report

Devens
Enterprise
Commission

Date: September 25, 2025

To: Devens Enterprise Commission

From: Neil Angus, FAICP Director

RE: Mirror Lake Parking Lot Expansion - Level 2 Unified Permit (#D25-009)

Applicant/Owner: MassDevelopment

Engineer: VHB, Inc.

Location: 98 and 150 Patton Road, Devens

Zoning: Open Space and Recreation District and Zone 2 Water Resource Protection District

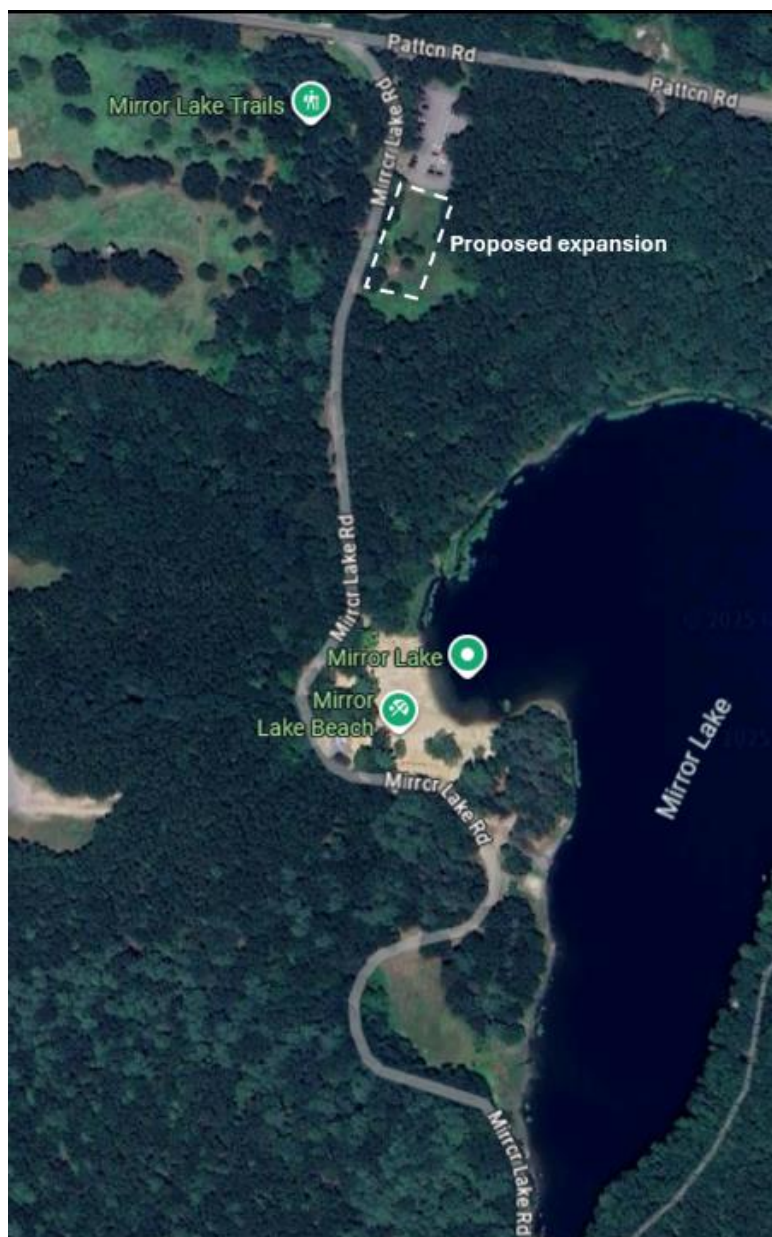
Premises and Proposed Project:

MassDevelopment is planning for the expansion of an existing 56-space visitor parking lot and associated site improvements at Mirror Lake. During the lake season, the existing parking lot is often filled up, forcing people to park along Patton Road (Devens truck route), creating unsafe pedestrian and driving conditions. The expansion takes advantage of an existing previously cleared area and will include 69 new parking spaces (porous pavement), drainage improvements and landscaping. The existing parking lot will also be re-striped to include trailer parking for boats/kayaks/canoes. The project is located within the Mirror Lake Conservation Restriction that is overseen by the Trustees of Reservations and is also within Estimate Priority Habitat for the Blandings Turtle and is subject to review by MassWildlife.

The complete application was circulated to MassDevelopment and the DEC Peer Review team for stormwater review. Revised plans were submitted by the Applicant on September 5, 2025 to address initial review comments on the stormwater design. The following is a summary of the project review and remaining issues:

Zoning Summary:

The property is located within the Open Space and Recreation Zoning District. The Devens



Open Space and Recreation Plan recognizes this area as a preservation area and The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) currently manage the Conservation Restriction (CR) over these lands. The proposed parking expansion is part of the Open Space Plan and is consistent with the MassDevelopment Master Plan for improvements to the lake – making it more accessible to more people, while respecting the natural environment. This, coupled with the need for improved safety, make this project consistent with the goals and objectives of the Devens Open Space and Recreation District. TTOR has reviewed and approved the proposed parking lot expansion.

Conservation Restriction and Endangered Species Management:

The proposed expansion is within priority habitat for the Blandings Turtle. The Applicant has received approval from Natural Heritage Endangered Species program and prepared a Turtle Management Plan and has already installed turtle protection fencing around the proposed work area. As part of this plan, prior to commencement of any construction, the Applicant's wildlife biologist will need to preform a sweep of the area to ensure they are not impacting any turtles or nesting sites.

Site Access/Traffic Safety:

Access to the site is primarily by car, however the parking lot does connect to the Devens multi-purpose trail and sidewalk network via a trail along Patton Road and a crosswalk at the Mirror Lake driveway entrance. The existing driveway entrance is very wide and DEC Staff have requested that the Applicant provide clear, delineated separation of vehicles and pedestrians in this area to help further improve site safety and circulation. This could be a combination of signage, striping and delineator posts. Fire Truck and boat trailer turning movements have been provided to ensure safe emergency access is available to the existing and new parking area. There is currently no lighting on-site and none is proposed as the lake operates from Dawn to Dusk.

Landscaping:

The proposed expansion is within a previously cleared area. Tree removal has been significantly minimized and proposed landscape islands have been laid out in a way to preserve some mature trees within the new proposed parking area. This will help reduce urban heat island impacts and help with stormwater runoff. Plans are being updated to provide a mix of conservation and pollinator meadow seed mixes to enhance natural habitat surrounding the new parking lot. A small area will be kept open and mowed to allow for picnicking near the parking area. There are significant stands of invasive species surrounding this area and the applicant has created a plan to manage invasives.

Stormwater Design:

The Applicant has designed the entire parking lot expansion using porous asphalt, eliminating the need for catch basins and drainage structures. An overflow outlet is provided to an existing level wooded area with sandy soils but based on the capacity of the porous pavement system, this area is not likely to receive any regular stormwater runoff. The system meets the 90% Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and 60% Total Phosphorous (TP) removal requirements of the DEC regulations and complies with the on-site infiltration and Low-Impact Development requirements of 974 CMR 3.04 and 4.08. MassDevelopment will update their stormwater operations and maintenance to address the new stormwater management features (porous pavement, pollinator meadow, conservation seed mix areas, and invasive species management).

Waiver Requests:

None.

Process:

MassDevelopment submitted a Level II Unified Permit application package on August 7, 2025. The pre-permitting conference was completed on July 29, 2025 and the Determination of Completeness was issued on August 13, 2025. Copies of the application and plans were received by the surrounding Towns on August 13, 2025. Legal notices were placed in Nashoba Publications on August 29, 2025 and September 5, 2025. Certified

Mail notice was sent to all abutting property owners on August 13, 2025. The 30-day town comment period expired on September 14, 2025. No public comments were received. The public hearing opens on September 30, 2025. The 75-day review period ends October 27, 2025.

Recommended Action:

If the Commission is satisfied that all issue of concerns have been addressed, staff would recommend closing the hearing. A draft record of decision will be prepared for the Commission's consideration. If there are still outstanding issues that need to be addressed and not conditioned, the commission may wish to continue the public hearing till the October 9, 2025 meeting at 7:30AM to provide additional time for the Applicant to resolve any remaining issues.

Attachments:

- [Revised Plans](#)
- [Response to Comments 9-22-25](#)
- [Nitsch Response to Comments 9/22/25](#)