



MEPA Q+A with US2

1. What is MEPA?

MEPA stands for the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act and requires state agencies to study the environmental consequences of certain projects. MEPA review occurs before permitting agencies act, to ensure that they are fully cognizant of environmental consequences of their actions. MEPA is not a permitting process. Rather it requires public study, disclosure and development of feasible mitigation for a proposed project.

2. What is a Phase 1 waiver?

A Phase 1 waiver may be permitted following expedited review for the first phase of a large-scale project. This type of request may be granted for large, multi-phase projects when the first project phase can stand-alone, has adequate infrastructure and when associated environmental impacts are minimized.

3. Does a Phase 1 waiver lessen the amount of environmental review?

The request only accelerates the review of the first development parcel of the project. The entire 2.4 million square foot development will undergo full MEPA review. We invite you to read our filing on [our website](#).

4. What will be built in Phase 1?

Phase 1 is located on 3.5 acres in the heart of Union Square (i.e., Block D2) and will create a vibrant, transit-oriented mixed-use development comprised of approximately 607,000 square feet of new office, lab, residential, and open space.

5. Is a Phase 1 waiver typical?

Phase 1 waivers have recently been given on the first phase of a number of significant projects. Those include Suffolk Downs, General Electric, Seaport Square, and Waterfront Square in Revere.

6. Why is US2 pursuing a waiver?

This waiver will allow construction to start before the end of this year. This is critical for a timely start of transit service at the new Union Square MBTA Station in April 2021. The first phase includes an ADA-compliant path from the station to Prospect Street, a drop-off area for The Ride paratransit program, MBTA employee facilities and 90 covered bicycle storage spaces for MBTA patrons. These improvements are required for the station to open.

7. What other Benefits does US2 Anticipate a Phase 1 waiver to provide?

By allowing construction to start, fiscal and economic benefits created by the project will flow to the city and community including private funds to offset the City's \$50 million Green Line Extension commitment, taxes to support \$63 million for Union Square infrastructure and a \$1 million community benefit contribution.

8. Many are familiar with the history of significant contamination on the D2 site. How specifically has this been addressed? How does a Phase 1 Waiver affect any outstanding remediation work?

The D2 site will be remediated as part of the Phase 1 redevelopment in accordance with state and federal environmental regulations. The MEPA Phase 1 waiver will not change the scope or timing of the remediation. In order to finance the development, any project lender and investor would require site clean up consistent with federal and state requirements. US2 and the Phase 1 project are no exception.

9. How have traffic, parking, and transportation impacts in the D2 Phase 1 waiver been evaluated?

Phase 1 is being added to the City's transportation plan for the neighborhood that was designed during the Union Square Neighborhood Planning Process. The plan anticipated future development growth while prioritizing the City's goal to create a walkable neighborhood that favors pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders over cars. As a complement to the City's transportation planning, the MEPA filing includes an extensive vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle analysis for the entire Union Square development, including data collection at over 30 intersections.

Phase 1 design and operations are planned to be consistent with the City's transportation plan and includes a commitment to 60% non-auto transportation through the mobility management plan outlined in the MEPA filing. The approach to parking management minimizes the number of spaces provided and maximizes their utility by making available spaces open to the public. Cyclist will be supported by 650 new bicycle parking spaces and pedestrians will enjoy gracious new pedestrian walks. Lastly, Phase 1 will provide critical infrastructure for the Union Square MBTA Station as well as making a \$1.5 million transit contribution to offset the City's \$50 million GLX commitment.

10. How have stormwater and flooding issues in Union Square been addressed in the Phase 1 waiver?

Stormwater water management will be addressed through the neighborhood level strategies as well as Phase 1 site strategies. The City's \$63 million Somerville Avenue Utility and Streetscape Project includes a box culvert that will provide 800,000 gallons of stormwater storage to mitigate neighborhood flooding. Phase 1 is critical to the funding of this infrastructure project: Phase 1 private investment facilitated the \$16 million MassWorks infrastructure grant; Phase 1 includes a \$1 million infrastructure contribution; and Phase 1 real estate taxes will fund the City's infrastructure bonds.

Phase I will also include onsite stormwater management features that will comply with the Department of Environmental Protection's standards and the City of Somerville's Code of Ordinances to the greatest extent practicable. New green spaces and detention and/or infiltration systems will reduce the rate of stormwater flow from the site compared to the existing condition, and stormwater will be treated prior to discharge from the site. Phase I will be resilient, designed with consideration of the potential for flood impacts and including flood sensitive and emergency backup systems.

11. What are the next steps in the process?

The filing was submitted to MEPA on July 2, 2018. MEPA will conduct a site visit with the proponents, the city and stakeholders on August 2, 2018. The site visit is open to the public, [more details here](#). US2 has requested an extension of the comment period through August 24, 2018.