

URGENT “STOP PAYNE”’S CROSSING” ALERT!

Write your comment letter today! PLEASE! These letters are vitally important!
Deadline for receipt of letters is this coming Friday, November 7th.
Our goal is 300 letters to MEPA!

Very serious traffic and public safety issues must be brought to MEPA’s attention.

MEPA TAKES YOUR LETTERS VERY SERIOUSLY AS THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN THE PAST. YOUR LETTERS ARE THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST THE BIG BOX DEVELOPMENT. PLEASE RESPOND AND LET MEPA KNOW YOUR OBJECTIONS.

How Much Traffic Will Payne’s Crossing Add to South Main Street?

As many as *15,000 to 20,000 new vehicle trips per day* will be generated by the Big Box stores.

The Big Box developer calculates their traffic estimates by starting out with 15,000 to 20,000 trips, then creatively adjusts those trips downward to 11,000 to 14,000 trips. SRPEDD (Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District) recently wrote to MEPA contesting those numbers as “flawed”, stating that the starting numbers should be higher (a different code should be used), and the adjustments (ITE and Pass-By rates) should be much lower, resulting in nearly 40% more vehicle trips, back to the original 15,000 to 20,000 vehicle trips per day.

McMahon Associates, Transportation Planners and Engineers, commissioned by ABAC to review the newest Payne’s Crossing” proposal, states that although both *methods* of determining the starting number for vehicle trips are acceptable, McMahon does agree with SRPEDD’s arguments on adjustments to the starting number.

Both McMahon and SRPEDD reached the same conclusion from different assumptions and both found that the big box developer’s traffic numbers are flawed and too low.

Did the developer utilize the comments and recommendations of McMahon Associates, Transportation Planners and Engineers, commissioned by the Assonet Bay Action Committee (citizens of Freetown)?

McMahon’s comments and recommendations on two previous Payne’s Crossing proposals were simply disregarded by the Payne’s Crossing Proponent. McMahon’s reviews of these proposals, for citizens of Freetown, were compiled with the guiding principle of “what is in the best interests of the Town of Freetown”. McMahon’s comments and recommendations were relegated to a “Sensitivity Analysis”, within the SSFEIR, which not only dismissed the importance of McMahon’s findings, but misapplied some of their assumptions as well.

Will the “P.C.” Big Box developer widen the roadway under the Exit 9 Bridge?

NO! The developer proposes three traffic “strategies” in the latest Payne’s Crossing” proposal. *None of those proposals* calls for widening South Main Street under Route 24 at Exit 9. Payne’s Crossing “Big Box” Traffic will most certainly back-up under the bridge causing gridlock!

How will fire trucks and ambulances and police cars get through a traffic jam on South Main Street at the Exit 9 bridge?

The developer proposes to *re-paint the existing* two (15 foot lanes) under Route 24 at Exit 9, *creating three 10 foot lanes!* The developer further suggests that in an emergency, *vehicles will pull over to the right, allowing fire trucks and ambulances and police through!*

This is an absurd proposal! The extraordinary traffic from Payne’s Crossing will most drastically slow emergency services down! Freetown’s Police and Fire Chief both agree that emergency response times will increase! The increased volume of traffic generated by a Big Box development at Payne’s Crossing demands a widening of South Main Street, and a new Exit 9 interchange, not simply a new paint job!

Why has the developer moved the Payne’s Crossing driveway even closer to Exit 9?

The developer proposes in its newest proposal to *move the Payne’s Crossing driveway 140 feet closer to the Exit 9 ramp!* Moving the driveway closer to Exit 9 *only worsens the gridlock potential* under the bridge! This move is an apparent attempt to circumvent the “South Main Street Corridor Overlay” zoning by-law which was *passed overwhelmingly by the citizens of Freetown* earlier this year. Once again the concerns of Freetown’s citizens are ignored by the developer!

Will the concept of “Roundabouts”, as proposed by the developer, ease traffic concerns?

HIGHLY DOUBTFUL! Roundabouts could likely make a very bad situation even worse! A full understanding of the roundabout concept is not possible due to the fact that the developer has not provided sufficient data. McMahon Associates was unable to review the “roundabout” strategies because analysis of those strategies was not included in the SSFEIR. The impacts of roundabout strategies could not be assessed. Thus McMahon’s remarks:

“We urgently and respectfully request that either no decision or an inadequate finding on the SSFEIR (Payne’s Crossing proposal) be rendered by MEPA until the Proponent provides additional information”.

Has the developer answered our concerns that Payne's Crossing will generate even more traffic at Holiday times?

YES and NO! The developer's Holiday plan is:

To provide up to five police details from Thanksgiving to Christmas at up to five intersections along South Main Street; Narrows Road, the site driveway, both Exit 9 ramps, and the Assonet 4 corners. The developer will fund the details for a five year period.

McMahon Response: *"The SSFEIR does not provide any supporting information, such as holiday trip generation or peak holiday period traffic analysis, to determine if the proposed provision of police details will adequately handle the level of expected holiday period traffic this project will generate".*

Just think of what your commute home to Assonet Bay Shores or to work at Crystal Springs, or Stop and Shop, or Independence Harbor will be like between Thanksgiving and Christmas every year! And, how quickly will emergency vehicles get through five police details along South Main Street?

And, what happens after five years? Who pays then?

Many other traffic and public safety concerns are raised in the latest Payne's Crossing proposal (SSFEIR):

- *Study area should be expanded south of Stop and Shop to Exit 8 in Fall River.
- *Background growth rate of 2% used by the Proponent in calculating trip generation may be understated.
- *Traffic forecasts using the abandoned Boston Beer project at Campanelli Park should be updated.
- *The inappropriate application of peak hour factors (PHF) by the Proponent shows lower reported delays, lower volume to capacity ratios and lower queuing than actually exist.
- *Worsening levels of service created by the proposed Payne's Crossing at the Elm Street/Mill Street intersection, and the 4 corners, are offered no capacity improvement mitigation by the Proponent. LOS E for both intersections.

State versus Town responsibility for roads:

The SSFEIR states that 45% of the Payne's Crossing traffic will travel along South and North Main Streets, Elm Street, Mill Street etc. Mass Highway has made it clear that they have responsibility only for the sections of South Main Street in the immediate vicinity (couple hundred feet) of the Exit 9 and 10, Route 24 ramps. All other roadways are Freetown's responsibility, ours to maintain, ours to improve if Payne's Crossing mitigation doesn't work out, and it won't!

Has the location of the Payne's Crossing Big Box development been confirmed as safe from fly ash contamination of Payne's Cove, The Assonet River and Assonet Bay?

NO! The ABAC has commissioned Geo-Hydro of Denver, Colorado, geologists and hydrologists and experts on fly ash, to review fly ash related concerns in this latest Payne's Crossing proposal. Geo-Hydro once again has determined that:

.. monitoring of the fly ash landfill (proposed site of the Big Box stores) is and has been ***inaccurate and incomplete.***

.. monitoring data from the fly ash dump is being and has been compromised by ***inappropriate well placement.***

..the strength of the fly ash landfill may have decreased and its ***permeability increased.***

Inaccurate and incomplete monitoring, and inappropriate well placement simply means that we do not know what is truly happening at the fly ash landfill. The environmentally fragile and globally rare Payne's Cove, Assonet River and Assonet Bay are natural resources too precious to endanger unnecessarily! Geo-Hydro has questioned time and time again the proper monitoring of the site, and Mass DEP and the developer have offered barely more than a shoulder shrug to these recommendations! Development of the site could create additional concerns of potential fly ash pollution.

We are asking that MEPA find the SSFEIR incomplete due to the uncertainty regarding the inaccurate and incomplete monitoring of the fly ash landfill, as well as due to the developer's misunderstanding of the nature of fly ash, as documented in its inaccurate statements in the SSFEIR that fly ash is "inert and impermeable".

At the very least, an immediate, independent, and comprehensive analysis of the fly ash landfill should be undertaken. The safety of the site **MUST BE CONFIRMED** before the site is developed. ***Too many questions have been raised about the potential risk this unlined fly ash landfill presents to our environment!***

Has the developer answered the comment of Wetlands Scientist, Patrick Garner, that the Mean High Water Line of the Assonet River at Payne's Cove has not been properly documented by the developer?

The developer has failed to identify two critical wetland resource areas.

Patrick Garner, Wetlands Scientist and Hydrologist, has identified these two areas as missing or improperly indicated in the Payne's Crossing proposal; the "Bordering Land Subject to Flooding" (BLSF), and the "Mean High Water Line" (MHW) of the Assonet River. The Mean High Water Line is critical in determining the beginning of the riverfront area, a point of reference for determining wetlands resource areas throughout the entire site. According to Garner, the MHW has not been properly designated.

LETTERS! LETTERS! LETTERS!

Whether by email or regular mail, PLEASE send your letters of concern to MEPA!

Be certain your letters are **RECEIVED** by MEPA **no later than**
Friday, November 7, 2008.

We have outlined many of the important issues raised by this latest Payne's Crossing proposal. There are MANY MORE! Please visit www.saveassonetbay.com for further details. Full text of the McMahon and SRPEDD traffic reports, the Geo-Hydro fly ash report, the Patrick Garner wetlands report are all available on the web site.

This is something we can all do to help "Stop Payne's Crossing"...the Big Box development!

The Assonet Bay Action Committee (ABAC)