

## Environmental Justice Screening Form

Project Name	Puffer’s Pond Dam Repair and Recreational Improvements
Anticipated Date of MEPA Filing	January 2026
Proponent Name	Town of Amherst c/o David Ziomek Assistant Town Manager 4 Boltwood Avenue Amherst, MA 01002-2351
Contact Information (e.g., consultant)	Alison Baranovic – Alison.Baranovic@fando.com with Fuss & O’Neill, Inc.
Public website for project or other physical location where project materials can be obtained (if available)	Additional project material may be requested by email using the contact information above and through the town website at <a href="https://www.amherstma.gov/1316/Puffers-Pond">https://www.amherstma.gov/1316/Puffers-Pond</a>
Municipality and Zip Code for Project (if known)	Amherst, Massachusetts 01002- 2351
Project Type* (list all that apply)	Dam Repair, Dredging, Recreation
Is the project site within a mapped 100-year FEMA flood plain? Y/N/unknown	Yes
Estimated GHG emissions of conditioned spaces ( <a href="#">click here for GHG Estimation tool</a> )	N/A – there are no conditioned spaces associated with this project

### Project Description

**1. Provide a brief project description, including overall size of the project site and square footage of proposed buildings and structures if known.**

Factory Hollow Pond, commonly known as Puffer’s Pond, is an impoundment on Cushman Brook in Amherst, Massachusetts. It is the largest open body of water in Amherst and is a heavily used public amenity, serving as a regional destination for recreational activities such as swimming, fishing, kayaking, and walking. Its proximity to the town center makes it a vital community resource, drawing visitors for across the region.

The proposed project aims to address structural deficiencies in the existing dam and dike, create a more accessible and safe destination for all to enjoy, and restore, protect, and enhance ecologically sensitive areas of the pond. The proposed activities include dam and dike repairs which will improve the safety, functionality, and regulatory compliance of the structures. Recreational improvements include trail and beach upgrades, installation of boardwalks and viewing platforms, and improvements to parking, traffic safety, and handicap accessibility. Restoration activities include removal of excess sediment accumulation and wetland enhancement. By implementing these improvements, Amherst will continue to accommodate and grow the dedicated use of this locally and regionally significant resource while safeguarding its ecological integrity.

**2. List anticipated MEPA review thresholds (301 CMR 11.03) (if known)**

Wetlands, Waterways, and Tidelands ENF Threshold

- 301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(1)(b): alteration of 500 or more linear feet of bank along a fish run or inland bank provided that a permit is required.
- 301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(1)(f): alteration of ½ or more acres of any other wetlands provided that a permit is required.

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

Authorizing Agency	Permits, Reviews, or Approvals
<b>Local</b>	
Amherst Conservation Commission	Notice of Intent
<b>State</b>	
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	Expanded Environmental Notification Form Single Environmental Impact Report
MA Department of Environmental Protection	401 Water Quality Certification Chapter 91 Waterways License
MA Department of Recreation and Conservation (MADCR)	Chapter 253 Dam Safety Permit
Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources (MBUAR), and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs)	Determination of Effect
<b>Federal</b>	
U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers	Section 404 Pre-Construction Notification
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	NPDES Construction General Permit Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

**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)**

See attached EJ map.

**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**

The following census tracts meet the definition of vulnerable health EJ criteria:

- Census Tract 25011040600 – Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence
- Census Tract 25011040800- Low Birth Weight

The following municipalities meet the definition of vulnerable health EJ Criteria:

- **Sunderland**- Childhood Asthma, Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence, and Low Birth Weight
- **Amherst** – Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence
- **Leverett** – Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence

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

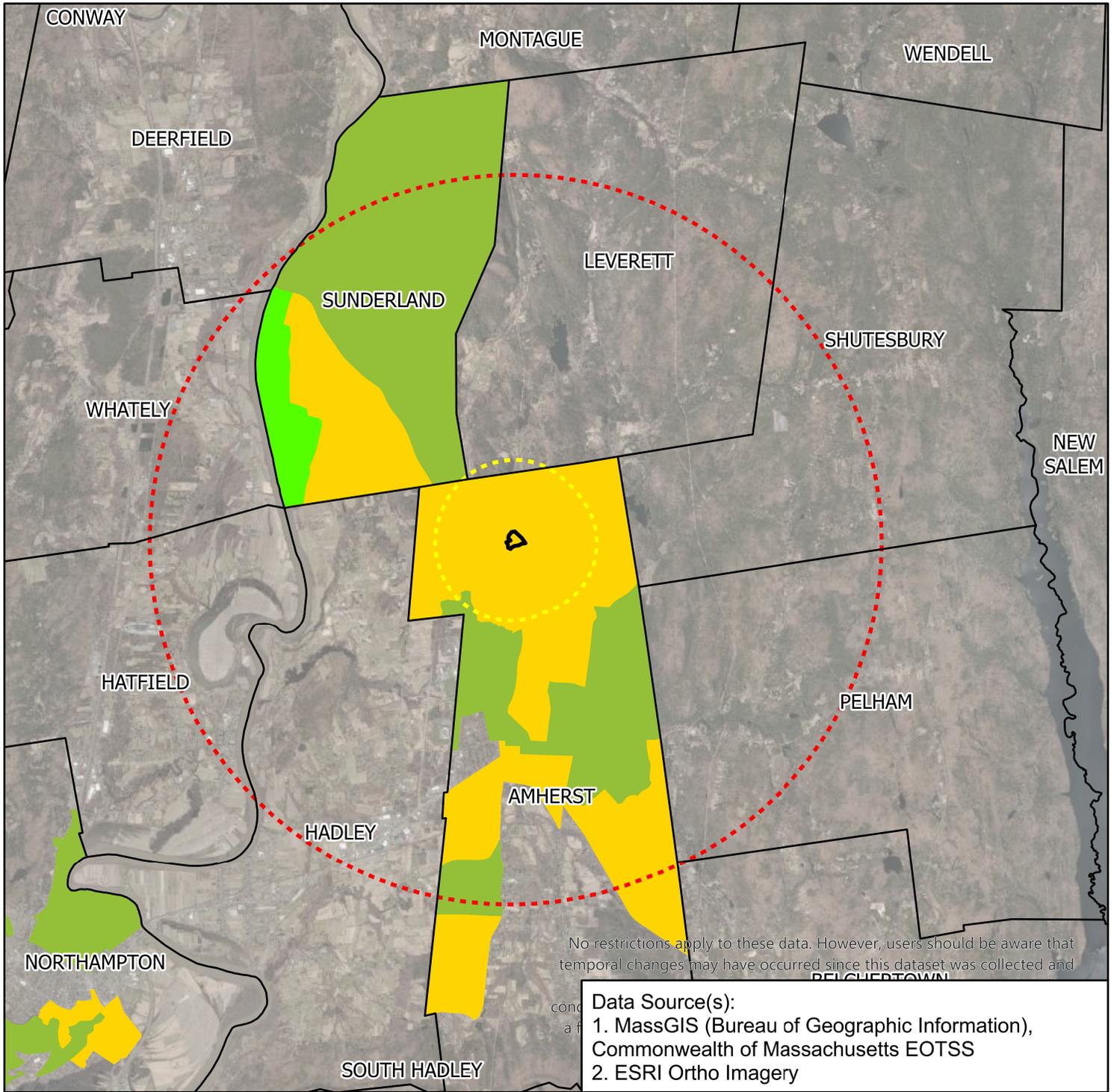
The proposed project will result in temporary, construction- period impacts on air quality resulting from increased noise and the transport and operation of construction equipment. Best management practices including construction phasing, and implementation of sedimentation, erosion, and water controls have been included in the planning and design to minimize and mitigate potential impacts. The proposed activities are not anticipated to have adverse long-term public health or environmental impacts. Dam and dike repair will result in long-term benefits to public safety by addressing deficiencies. It is anticipated that the proposed project will result in long-term environmental and public health benefits for EJ populations by providing increased safe access to open space and recreation opportunities.

**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.**

The proposed project will deliver multiple benefits that improve public safety and environmental conditions by repairing the Factory Hollow Dam and Dike to meet Massachusetts dam safety standards, reducing flood risk and protecting downstream communities. These improvements enhance climate resiliency by reinforcing infrastructure to withstand peak flows and severe storm events while supporting water quality and habitat adaptation. The project also advances environmental justice by creating safer, more accessible recreational opportunities at Puffer’s Pond, a heavily used public amenity, through improved pedestrian access and inclusive design. Additional benefits include improved aesthetics, improved and additional access to recreational opportunities, and promoting positive mental and physical health through equitable access to nature for EJ populations.

**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.**

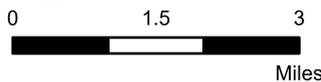
Please inquire by email to Alison Baranovic at [alison.baranovic@fando.com](mailto:alison.baranovic@fando.com)



**EJ 2020**

- Minority: the block group minority population is  $\geq 40\%$ , or the block group minority population is  $\geq 25\%$  and the median household income of the municipality the block group is in is  $< 150\%$  of the Massachusetts median household income
- Income: at least 25% of households have a median household income 65% or less than the state median household income
- Language isolation: 25% or more of households do not include anyone older than 14 who speaks English very well
- Minority and income
- Minority and English isolation

- Income and English isolation
- Minority, income and English isolation
- 1-Mile Radius
- 5-Mile Radius
- Limit of Work



Environmental Justice Map  
 Puffer's Pond Dam Repair and Recreational Improvements  
 Amherst MA

**FUSS & O'NEILL**

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**Figure 1**

Disclaimer: This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. makes no warrantee, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.