PB-412 | Birch Street & Bay State Road

Cambridge, Massachusetts | Updated November 14, 2026 | MassDEP RTN 3-0054104

The story at a glance

The Cambridge Planning Board voted October 6, 2026 to approve PB-412, a proposed approximately 84-unit residential development associated with 9 and 25 Birch Street and 30–36 Bay State Road. The written decision was filed November 9. The developer is BSR Birch LLC.

Environmental records report chlorinated solvents, including vinyl chloride and dichloroethene, at the PB-412 property (MassDEP RTN 3-0054104). A **November 11 MassDEP submission** adds tables and boring logs from **April 2026** soil and groundwater sampling. Separately, MassDEP reported additional drilling and monitoring well installation in early November; those newer analytical results were not included in the November 11 submission. [1–2]

Selected newly available results

April sample / medium	Measured vinyl chloride	Listed reportable value
B-101 groundwater	0.051 mg/L	0.002 mg/L (RCGW-2)
B-102 groundwater	0.019 mg/L	0.002 mg/L (RCGW-2)
B-102 soil, 14–16 feet	0.32 mg/kg	0.3 mg/kg (RCS-1)

April observations recorded groundwater about 6–7 feet below ground surface at the two sampling points. This prompts questions about proposed excavation depth and possible groundwater management, but does not establish whether dewatering will be required. [2]

What these results do not establish

An exceedance of a listed **reporting concentration** is not proof of human exposure or a completed health-risk assessment. These materials do not establish the contamination source, groundwater-flow direction, off-site migration, exposure to nearby residents or schoolchildren, or a construction-stage response plan. [1–2]

Two separate sites and investigations

PB-412: RTN 3-0054104, developer BSR Birch LLC, LSP team McPhail Associates. **445 Concord Avenue:** historically contaminated former industrial site, separate RTN 3-0000959, with Haley & Aldrich as the environmental consultant. The developer has attributed PB-412 contamination to migration from the neighboring site, but that attribution is not independently established by the November 11 materials.

Recent chronology

Key dates documented in public filings and City/MassDEP correspondence

May 20, 2026 — Reported date of knowledge. The PB-412 release notification identifies this date of knowledge.

September 17, 2026 — PB-412 release notification. MassDEP release notification filed under RTN 3-0054104.

October 6, 2026 — Planning Board vote. Cambridge Planning Board voted to approve the revised PB-412 special permit.

October 30, 2026 — Notice of Responsibility. MassDEP issued a Notice of Responsibility for the PB-412 release.

November 9, 2026 — Decision filed; further investigation confirmed. The written Planning Board decision was filed. MassDEP separately reported additional borings and monitoring wells installed during the week of November 2.

November 11, 2026 — Environmental testing summary filed. BWSC-126 and supporting April soil/groundwater test materials submitted under RTN 3-0054104.

Construction and neighborhood questions

- When will the early-November analytical results and updated groundwater and sampling maps be available?
- What excavation depths are proposed, could work intersect groundwater, and what dewatering or discharge controls might apply?
- What pre-demolition asbestos surveys, applicable notifications, dust, soil and vapor controls will be documented?
- When will the Construction Management Program, truck routes, street/sidewalk access plans and school-related advance notices be available?
- Will the City, developer, MassDEP and both LSP teams participate in technical coordination and a public neighborhood information session?

About Responsible Cambridge Development

RCD is a resident-led initiative of immediate Birch Street and Bay State Road neighbors. It supports additional housing and requests verified environmental data, safe construction practices, responsible public access planning and timely communication. It does not assert that local residents were exposed or that the developer committed violations.

Media contact: neighbors@responsiblecambridgedevelopment.org
Website: https://www.responsiblecambridgedevelopment.org
Primary sources: See accompanying “PB-412 Media Sources & Verification Guide” (November 14, 2026).