

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office

Environmental Notification Form

For Office Use Only

EEA#: 15875

MEPA Analyst: Alex Steysky

The information requested on this form must be completed in order to submit a document electronically for review under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: Melnea Cass Boulevard Reconstruction

Street Address: Melnea Cass Boulevard

Municipality: City of Boston

Watershed: Charles

Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:

4689176N 328044E

Latitude: N 42° 20' 9"

Longitude: W 71° 5' 14"

Estimated commencement date: 2019

Estimated completion date: 2022

Project Type: Transportation

Status of project design: 25% Design

Proponent: City of Boston

Street Address: 1 City Hall Square, Room 721

Municipality: Boston

State: MA

Zip Code: 02201-2026

Name of Contact Person: Matthew Jasmin, P.E.

Firm/Agency: Howard Stein Hudson

Street Address: 11 Beacon Street, Suite 1010

Municipality: Boston

State: MA

Zip Code: 02108

Phone: 617-348-3359

Fax: N/A

E-mail: MJasmin@hshassoc.com

Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)?

Yes No

If this is an Expanded Environmental Notification Form (ENF) (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) or a Notice of Project Change (NPC), are you requesting:

a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8))

Yes No

a Special Review Procedure? (see 301CMR 11.09)

Yes No

a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11)

Yes No

a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11)

Yes No

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Alex Steyn

(Note: Greenhouse Gas Emissions analysis must be included in the Expanded ENF.)

Which MEPA review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03)?

301 CMR 11.03(6)(b)2b. Construction, widening or maintenance of a roadway or its right-of-way that will cut 5 or more living public shade trees of 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height.

Which State Agency Permits will the project require?

An 8(m) permit will be required due to the crossing of a Main Drainage Tunnel owned by the MWRA.

Identify any financial assistance or land transfer from an Agency of the Commonwealth, including the Agency name and the amount of funding or land area in acres:

This project is planned to be funded through the 2019 Transportation Improvement Program for the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Estimated Total Federal Participating Funding Cost: \$25,290,000

**Summary of Project Size
& Environmental Impacts**

LAND

| | Existing | Change | Total |
|--|----------|--------|-------|
| Total site acreage | 18.1 | - | - |
| New acres of land altered | - | N/A | - |
| Acres of impervious area | 13.1 | - 0.3 | 12.8 |
| Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration | - | N/A | - |
| Square feet of new other wetland alteration | - | N/A | - |
| Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways | - | N/A | - |

STRUCTURES

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Gross square footage | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Number of housing units | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Maximum height (feet) | N/A | N/A | N/A |

TRANSPORTATION

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|-----|
| Vehicle trips per day | 37,492 | N/A | N/A |
| Parking spaces | 18 | 0 | 18 |

WASTEWATER

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Water Use (Gallons per day) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Water withdrawal (GPD) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Wastewater generation/treatment (GPD) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Length of water mains (miles) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Length of sewer mains (miles) | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Has this project been filed with MEPA before?

Yes (EEA # _____) No

Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before?

Yes (EEA # _____) No

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The objective of this project is to reconstruct the Melnea Cass Boulevard in order to serve not only drivers but pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders more equitably, to improve safety, and to integrate land-uses on either side of the street. Melnea Cass Boulevard was constructed in the 1970's as a crosstown arterial connector, which was originally set aside for the Inner Belt expressway in the Southwest Corridor of the City of Boston. Although the street was designed to accommodate an easement for circumferential "Urban Ring" public transportation, and efforts were made to limit left-turn conflicts and shorten pedestrian crossings, the street's scale and heavy traffic volumes have created a pedestrian barrier between adjoining neighborhoods. The design provides Complete Streets elements that improve comfort and safety for pedestrians and cyclists while maintaining vehicular capacity and operations. The project aims to change the character of Melnea Cass Boulevard to set the stage for economic vibrancy by improving safety by reducing conflict points and vehicular speeds, improving pedestrian crossing and comfort, and creating a gateway entrance to the Roxbury and South End neighborhoods.

The goal of this design as refined through communication and coordination with local community members, City of Boston Officials, MassDOT Officials and transportation advocates is to develop a complete streets focused solution that provides a focus on enhancing safety and access for all modes and user groups while limiting the impacts to existing mature trees. To develop a comprehensive preliminary design, the design team has conducted multiple public meetings, participated in over 15 coordination meetings with transportation advocates and project stakeholders, consulted with landscape architects, MA certified arborists, tree relocation specialists, and MassDOT Environmental and Landscape Architecture staff. This level of coordination has resulted in an iterative design process that has reduced the number of trees that are in fair to good condition that are proposed to be impacted from the original complete streets focused concept plan of 215 trees down to the currently proposed 48 trees. In order to mitigate this impact the project also seeks to include approximately 250 new tree plantings which will provide a replacement ratio of greater than five to one. In an effort to ensure a tree canopy that improves over time the project will also provide maintenance of the site which shall include the removal of dead trees and the select removal and replacement of trees in poor/declining condition.

EXISTING ROADWAY CONDITIONS:

The following nine intersections constitute the study area for this report:

- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Columbus Avenue/Ruggles Station Driveway;
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Tremont Street (Route 28);
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Kerr Way;
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Shawmut Avenue;
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Washington Street;
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Harrison Avenue;
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Albany Street;
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Hampden Street, and
- Melnea Cass Boulevard/Northampton Street (Crosstown Drive).

Melnea Cass Boulevard is approximately 0.9 miles long and extends from Massachusetts Avenue to Columbus Avenue in the South End neighborhood of Boston. Across Massachusetts Avenue, Melnea Cass Boulevard connects to the "Massachusetts Avenue Connector," which provides access to I-93 and I-90. Melnea Cass Boulevard is classified as an urban principal arterial under control of the City of Boston. Melnea Cass Boulevard provides two lanes in each direction with additional left turn lanes at Tremont Street, Washington Street, Harrison Avenue, Hampden Street, and Massachusetts Avenue. All of the intersections along the street are signalized, except the intersection with Northampton Street (Crosstown Drive). While varying in width from block to block, the roadway is generally 55 feet wide, with 7-foot sidewalks on either side. The sidewalks are generally in fair conditions. The travel lanes vary from 11-16 feet wide. The pavement and pavement markings vary from good to poor condition. The signage along Melnea Cass Boulevard is generally in good condition.

On-street parking is prohibited along the entire roadway. Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Buses 1, 8, 19, 47, and CT3 run along Melnea Cass Boulevard within the study area. On the north side of the street, a 40-foot wide easement has been provided to accommodate Urban Ring public transportation. Today this easement is planted with trees and the pedestrian/bicycle path, the South Bay Harbor Trail (SBHT), runs through it. Land-use along Melnea Cass Boulevard consists of residential, school, office, and commercial.

There are no posted speed limits on Melnea Cass Boulevard although the City of Boston has recently voted to institute a city-wide speed limit of 25 m.p.h.

Columbus Avenue is approximately 50 feet wide and extends from Tremont Street near Northeastern University and Ruggles Station in Roxbury to Park Plaza in Downtown Boston. Columbus Avenue is under City of Boston jurisdiction and is classified as an urban principal arterial. Columbus Avenue provides one lane in each direction with a 7-foot cobblestone median and 5-foot bike lanes along both sides of the roadway. Travel lanes are generally 11 feet wide. East of Dartmouth Street, Columbus Avenue consists of two lanes in each direction with sharrows.

On-street parking is provided along both sides of the roadway. Ruggles Station is located at the southern end of Columbus Avenue and serves the MBTA Orange Line, multiple bus routes, and the MBTA commuter rail. Land-use along Columbus Avenue consists of Northeastern University, residential, restaurant, retail, and commercial. The Southwest Corridor Park runs adjacent to Columbus Avenue along the west side from the southern terminus to Camden Street. Sidewalks 8 - 12 feet in width are provided along both sides of the roadway and are in fair condition. Within the vicinity of the study area, the pavement and pavement markings are in fair to poor conditions. The signage is generally in fair condition. There are no posted speed limits on Columbus Avenue but the speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on City regulations.

Tremont Street, an urban principal arterial under City of Boston jurisdiction, extends from Huntington Avenue in Mission Hill to Cambridge Street in Downtown Boston. Tremont Street runs primarily north-south in the vicinity of the study area and is approximately 60 to 80 feet wide. Between Huntington Avenue and Malcolm X Boulevard, Tremont Street consists of one lane in each direction with on-street parking along both sides. Between Malcolm X Boulevard and Ruggles Street, Tremont Street consists of three lanes in each direction separated by a concrete median. Between Ruggles Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard, Tremont Street is striped as three northbound lanes and varies between two and three southbound lanes. The sidewalks are approximately 10 feet wide and are provided along both sides of the roadway in fair to poor condition. The pavement and pavement markings are in poor condition within the vicinity of Melnea Cass Boulevard. The signage within the area is in fair condition.

On-street parking is not provided along Tremont Street between Malcolm X Boulevard and Melnea Cass Boulevard except for a short section for Boston Police vehicles. North of Melnea Cass Boulevard, Tremont Street generally consists of two lanes in each direction with on-street parking provided along both sides. Travel lanes are generally 11 - 12 feet wide. Within the vicinity of the study area, the MBTA Bus Route #43 provides service along Tremont Street. The MBTA Roxbury Crossing Station which serves the Orange Line and multiple MBTA Bus Routes is located on Tremont Street between Huntington Avenue and Malcolm X Boulevard. Within the vicinity of Melnea Cass Boulevard, the land-use along Tremont Street consists of the Boston Police Department, residential, Northeastern University, and retail locations. There are no posted speed limits on Tremont Street. The speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on City regulations.

Kerr Way, a local road under the control of the City of Boston, extends from Ruggles Street to Melnea Cass Boulevard in Roxbury. Kerr Way is 32 feet wide with two-way travel and no pavement markings. On-street parking is provided along both sides. The sidewalks are approximately 7 feet wide, in good condition, and run along both sides of Kerr Way. The pavement is in good to poor condition. Land-use along Kerr Way is mainly residential. There are no posted speed limits on Kerr Way. The speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on roadway characteristics.

Shawmut Avenue is classified as an urban minor arterial under the control of the City of Boston and runs north to south from Washington Street in Roxbury to Tremont Street in Bay Village, Boston. Shawmut Avenue is 40 - 50 feet wide and consists of three southbound travel lanes between Tremont Street and Herald Street. Between Herald Street and E. Berkeley Street, Shawmut Avenue is 40 feet and remains one-way southbound without lane markings. From East Berkeley Street to West Dedham Street, Shawmut Avenue is 40 feet wide, one-way northbound, and does not have lane markings. Near the study area, Shawmut Avenue runs one-way

southbound and is approximately 35 – 40 feet wide with no lane markings. South of Malcolm X Boulevard, Shawmut Avenue is approximately 40 – 45 feet wide with two-way travel before terminating at Washington Street. The travel lanes, when marked, are typically 11 – 12 feet however often times the marked lanes are adjacent to an unmarked parking lane.

On-street parking is provided along both sides of the roadway except on the bridge over I-90. Within the vicinity of the study area, sidewalks vary in width from 8 – 9 feet and are in good condition. The pavement and pavement markings are in fair to poor condition. The signage is in fair condition. Within the vicinity of the study area, land-use along Shawmut Avenue primarily consists of residential, retail, Ramsay Park, and commercial. There are no posted speed limits on Shawmut Avenue. The speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on roadway characteristics.

Washington Street is classified as urban principal arterial and runs north to south from the Arborway in Jamaica Plain near the Forest Hills MBTA Station to Court Street in Downtown Boston. Washington Street is under control of the City of Boston. Between Milk Street and Court Street, Washington Street is one-way northbound and approximately 20 – 25 feet wide with one northbound travel lane. Between Milk Street and Temple Place, Washington Street is considered a pedestrian-only roadway with limited commercial vehicle access only. Between Temple Place and Kneeland Street, Washington Street is approximately 30 feet wide and one-way northbound with three travel lanes. Washington Street changes to a two-way roadway between Kneeland Street and Marginal Road and consists of two lanes in each direction separated by a concrete median. Between Marginal Road and E Berkeley Street, Washington Street is one-way northbound, approximately 50 – 60 feet wide, and consists of two travel lanes. South of E Berkeley Street, Washington Street is a two-way roadway approximately 60 feet wide and consists of one lane in each direction. South of Herald Street, bus/bicycle lanes are provided along both sides of the roadway. Within the vicinity of the study area, travel lanes vary in width between 10 – 15 feet. Sidewalks are in fair condition and are provided along both sides of the road and vary between 7 – 30 feet near the intersection with Melnea Cass Boulevard.

Within the vicinity of the study area, pavement markings are in fair to worn condition and the pavement and signage are in good condition. On-street parking is provided along both sides of the roadway near the study area and throughout most of the corridor. Near the study area, land-use along Washington Street primarily consists of retail and commercial locations and Ramsay Park. There are no posted speed limits on Washington Street. The speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on roadway characteristics.

Harrison Avenue, an urban minor arterial under the City of Boston jurisdiction, runs north to south from Warren Street in Roxbury to Ave de Lafayette in Downtown Boston. North of Herald Street, Harrison Avenue is 30 to 40 feet wide and consists of one southbound lane with on-street parking provided along both sides. On the bridge over I-90, Harrison Avenue consists of three southbound lanes. South of Herald Street and E Berkeley Street where two lanes in each direction, separated by a center median, are provided. The roadway varies in width from 40 – 80 feet.

Albany Street, an urban minor arterial under the City of Boston jurisdiction, runs north to south from Eustis Street in Roxbury to the Surface Road/South Station Connector. Albany Street is approximately 30 feet wide with one lane in each direction south of Hampden Street. North of Hampden Street, Albany Street varies in width between 55 – 65 feet and between one and two lanes in each direction. During this stretch of Albany Street, shared lane markings and, north of Massachusetts Avenue, bicycle lanes are provided along both sides of the roadway. North of the intersection with I-93 Frontage Road, Albany Street is approximately 40 feet wide and provides three southbound lanes with one-foot shoulders no on-street parking. Near the intersection with Melnea Cass Boulevard, travel lanes are approximately 12 – 14 feet wide. Within the vicinity of the study area, pavement and pavement markings are in fair to poor condition. Sidewalks in good condition are provided along both sides of the roadway and vary in width from 6 – 17 feet. Land-use in the area includes Orchard Gardens K-8 School, offices, and commercial properties. There are no posted speed limits on Albany Street. The speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on roadway characteristics.

Hampden Street, an urban minor arterial under the City of Boston jurisdiction, runs north to south from Dudley Street to Albany Street. Hampden Street is approximately 30 – 40 feet wide with one lane in each direction. Sidewalks that are 6 – 10 feet wide are provided along both sides of the street and are in good to poor condition. Pavement, pavement markings, and signage are in fair condition. On-street parking is not provided. Land use

along Hampden Street consists primarily of residential and commercial. There are no posted speed limits on Hampden Street. The speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on roadway characteristics.

Northampton Street runs north-south from Columbus Avenue to Melnea Cass Boulevard and is classified as an urban minor arterial. Northampton Street is under the City of Boston jurisdiction. Northampton Street ranges in width between 30 to 40 feet. East of Harrison Avenue and west of Tremont Street, Northampton Street consists of one lane in each direction. Between Harrison Avenue and Tremont Street, Northampton Street consists of one westbound travel lane. The travel lanes widths vary but are generally 12 feet wide where marked. On-street parking is provided along both sides of the roadway. The pavement and pavement markings are generally in poor condition except between Albany Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard where they are in good condition. Land use along Northampton Street consists of the Crosstown Center, retail locations, and residences. There are no posted speed limits on Northampton Street. The speed limit is assumed to be 25 mph based on roadway characteristics. Near the study area, on-street parking is not permitted.