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May 24, 2019

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME : Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Everett and Somerville  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Mystic River  
EEA NUMBER : 16015  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Massachusetts Property, LLC  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : April 24, 2019

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA; M.G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

I received comment letters from State Agencies, the Cities of Everett and Somerville, numerous stakeholders, and members of the public. The majority of comment letters explicitly support the project and note that it will provide a regionally significant bicycle and pedestrian connection between Everett and Somerville. Comment letters also note safety concerns with the width of the bridge, identify similar paths and bridges in the Commonwealth that have larger widths, and include a request that the Proponent consider a wider bridge (14-ft minimum) to reduce potential conflict points and collisions.

Project Description

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project includes construction of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over the Mystic River to connect the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Assembly Station and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR)

Draw Seven Park in Somerville with the Encore Boston Harbor resort and DCR's Gateway Park in Everett. The bridge will be approximately 12-feet (ft) wide, 785-ft long, and 35-ft high between Mean High Water (MHW) and the top of the structure. Lighting, signage, and benches will be provided along the entire length of the bridge. Benches will be installed such that they will not reduce or encroach upon the 12-ft wide clear path of the bridge.<sup>1</sup> The alignment will parallel the southeastern side of the existing MBTA railroad bridge and will cross under it to touch down in Somerville. The project will be constructed by the Proponent, in coordination with DCR. DCR will own and operate the bridge once constructed.

The ENF indicated that 2,040 pedestrian trips and 350 bicycle trips will use the bridge on an average weekday and 2,320 pedestrian trips and 390 bicycle trips will use the bridge on a weekend. As described in the ENF, the bridge will help to complete the 25-mile Mystic Greenways network, connect dozens of north shore communities with downtown Boston, and close a critical gap in the 3,000 mile East Coast Greenway. The ENF will also provide regional congestion benefits by creating a direct connection from Everett to the MBTA Assembly Station and improving mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### Project Site

The project site includes 1.63 total acres located in the Cities of Everett and Somerville, including 0.81 acres of upland and 0.82 acres below MHW. Upland areas are owned by the MBTA and the DCR. An MBTA railroad bridge and commuter lane railroad tracks cross the Mystic River approximately 100-ft upstream of the site. The portion of the site located in Everett contains an abutment and a granite block seawall associated with a former MBTA railbed. The portion of the site located in Somerville is comprised of DCR's Draw Seven Park. The site is adjacent to several planned or constructed developments that will extend the multi-modal path and enhance the functions of the project, including but not limited to: recreational and pedestrian improvements at DCR's Draw Seven Park, a multi-use path along the shoreline of the MBTA Charlestown Bus Facility (EEA# 15487), a harbor walk at the Encore Boston property (EEA #15060, f/k/a Wynn Boston Harbor), DCR's harborwalk connector to Gateway Park, and the Northern Strand Community Trail extension (EEA# 15999).

The entire project site is comprised of filled and flowed tidelands subject to Chapter 91 (c. 91) jurisdiction pursuant to the Waterways Regulations (310 CMR 9.00). Wetland resource areas within the site include: Land Under Ocean (LUO), Fish Run, Land Containing Shellfish, Coastal Bank, Riverfront Area, and Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF). According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) (number 25017C0439E, effective June 4, 2010), the majority of the project site is located within the 100-year flood zone (Zone AE) with a Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of 9 ft NAVD88. The project site is not located in Priority and/or Estimated Habitat as mapped by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's (DFW) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) or an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

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<sup>1</sup> Clarified in email from Richard Jabba (Fort Point Associates, Inc.) to Page Czepiga (MEPA Office) sent 5/21/19.

### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

Potential environmental impacts include alteration of 27,878 sf of land (including creation of 8,276 sf of impervious area) and alteration of the following wetland resource areas: LUO (205 sf permanent/3,337 sf temporary), Coastal Bank (299 lf permanent), Land Containing Shellfish (205 sf permanent/3,337 sf temporary), Fish Runs (299 sf permanent/3,337 sf temporary), and LSCSF (13,013 sf permanent). The project will dredge 552 cy of rock and sediment from below MHW to facilitate installation of the support piles.

Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts include: designing the bridge to minimize the number of pile supports in the water and to reduce the structure's footprint, use of "floating pier caps" to reduce construction period impacts, cleanup and stabilization of the shoreline, invasive species removal, construction of pedestrian walkways, and designing the structure reduce impacts to navigation.

### Jurisdiction and Permitting

This project is undergoing review and requires the filing of an ENF pursuant to Sections 11.03(3)(b)(1)(a) and 11.03(3)(b)(6) of the MEPA regulations because it requires State Agency Actions and will result alteration of a Coastal Bank and construction of a pile-supported structure of 2,000 or more sf base area (19,000 sf). The project requires an Access Permit from DCR and a 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) and c.91 License and Permit from MassDEP. According to the ENF, the project will require a Non-Vehicular Access Permit and Permit for Construction on Railroad Rights-of-Way from MassDOT. Comments from MassDOT indicate the project will require a License from the MBTA for work on their properties. The project also requires a land transfer from the MBTA to DCR in the form of an easement for the portion of the site on the Everett side of the Mystic River.

The project requires Orders of Conditions from the Somerville and Everett Conservation Commissions (or in the case of an appeal, a Superseding Order of Conditions from MassDEP) and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It will also require a Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) under the General Permits for Massachusetts in accordance with Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act.

The project is not receiving Financial Assistance from the Commonwealth. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction is limited to those aspects of the project that are within the subject matter of any required or potentially required Agency Actions and that may cause Damage to the Environment, as defined in the MEPA regulations.

### Review of the ENF

The ENF provided a description of existing and proposed conditions, a discussion of project alternatives, preliminary project plans, and identified measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate project

impacts. The Proponent provided supplemental information regarding wetland impacts, construction methodology, and bridge width to facilitate MEPA review.<sup>2</sup>

Many comments from members of the public and stakeholder groups identify the opportunity to provide direct access from the bridge to the Orange Line Assembly Station that could be realized with the construction of a new head house at Assembly Station. Comments from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) note they awarded a joint grant to the cities of Everett and Somerville to design a weather protected connector from Draw Seven Park to the Assembly Station head house. I encourage DCR to design the park such that it would not preclude future development of a head house. Construction of a head house would require close consultation with MassDOT/MBTA, a Land Transfer from DCR, and compliance with the EEA's *Article 97 Land Disposition Policy*. The Proponent should consult with the MEPA Office if the head house proceeds to determine whether additional MEPA review would be required. To address MassDOT concerns regarding coordination with MassDOT projects and infrastructure, the Proponent and DCR must work closely with MassDOT as project design progresses. Comments from MassDOT also indicate the project will provide safe connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists, potentially reduce the number of vehicles on the roadway network, improve regional bicycle connectivity, and improve multi-modal access to the Encore Boston Harbor resort.

The ENF described the project's consistency with several regional and local plans, including the City of Everett's *Waterfront Assessment* (2003), *Everett Central Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan* (2014), and *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2010-2017); DCR's *Mystic River Master Plan* (2009); and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) *Lower Mystic River Corridor Strategy* (2009), and *Walking Routes to the Lower Mystic River* (2014). According to the ENF, the need for a non-vehicular crossing of the Mystic River has been identified and considered in multiple planning studies, including: *The Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing of the Mystic River* (2009), *Northern Strand Communities Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan* (2013), and the City of Everett's *Lower Broadway District Master Plan* (2013). The bridge was also recommended by the Lower Mystic Regional Working Group's (LMRWG) *Planning for Improved Transportation and Mobility in the Sullivan Square Area* study (2019) to create a high-quality, shared use path throughout the Lower Mystic area and surrounding communities. The pedestrian bridge was identified in the review of the Encore Boston Harbor project (EEA# 15060, f/k/a Wynn Boston Harbor) as a potential regional improvement for pedestrian and bicycle travel.

### *Alternatives Analysis*

The ENF included a discussion of site and design constraints that impacted project design. These include: existing and planned adjacent development and multi-use path networks, matching the vertical and horizontal clearances of the adjacent commuter railroad bridge, maintaining a corridor adjacent to the railroad bridge for a future Silver Line extension, existing navigational channel, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. As described at the MEPA site visit, a No-Build Alternative was not considered because it would not meet the project goals to connect Somerville and Everett and provide a missing link in a regional bicycle and pedestrian network. According to the ENF, water transportation was dismissed based on insufficient capacity to meet demand and long-term operational

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<sup>2</sup> Email from Zoya Purvi (Wynn Design & Development) sent on 5/2/19, emails from Judith Kohn (Fort Point Associates) sent on 5/10/19 and 5/20/19, and email from Richard Jabba (Fort Point Associates) sent on 5/21/19 to Page Czepiga (MEPA Office).



and maintenance requirements. Appendix B of the ENF included a copy of the *Alternatives Analysis: Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing of the Mystic River Report* (2009 Report), dated June 2009, which evaluated the following four alternatives to create a shared use path over the Mystic River, in the area of the Amelia Earhart Dam:

- Alternative 1 – construct shared use path on existing dam access road and on the top of the locks, path would transition to 7-ft wide along dam structure.
- Alternative 2 – construct new 840-ft long fixed-span bridge structure across the river, north of the existing dam structure;
- Alternative 3 – construct shared use path along existing dam access road and onto a bridge with two movable spans to bypass the lock gates and to accommodate boat traffic; and
- Alternative 4 – construct shared use path cantilevered off the northern side of the MBTA railroad bridge.

The 2009 Report evaluated these alternatives based on the application of the following criteria: compatibility with dam operations and river navigation, right-of-way requirements, horizontal and vertical alignment, accessibility and connections with local features, compatibility with planning documents, construction costs, grades, aesthetic and visual conditions, and environmental and historic impacts. All four of the alternatives assumed construction of a 14-ft wide shared use path and/or bridge, except as noted above. Alternatives 1 and 3 were dismissed as they created operational conflicts and public safety concerns. Alternatives 2 and 4 were dismissed as they would require extensive and costly modifications to the existing MBTA railroad bridge or to construct a new bridge. I note comments from DMF and CZM encourage further consideration of the Alternative 4 as it would reduce the project costs and avoid or reduce environmental impacts compared to the Preferred Alternative.

Subsequent to the 2009 Report, and as a mitigation commitment of the Encore Boston Harbor project, the Proponent funded an additional study (*Mystic River Pedestrian Bridge – Concept Design Report*, AECOM, dated February 8, 2018) (2018 Report) to design a fixed-span bridge in the vicinity of the project site. The 25% design plans presented in the 2018 Report depict a 14-ft wide bridge in the same location and alignment of the Preferred Alternative. The design of the bridge in the 2018 Report was based on multiple stakeholder meetings which were held during the conceptual design phase to solicit input from on design elements of the bridge. I note that individuals at the MEPA site visit and many comment letters identify concerns regarding the reduction in the travel width of the bridge from 14-ft to 12-ft. The Proponent provided the following response to support the selection of a Preferred Alternative with a 12-ft wide clearance: narrower paths of travel will help to reduce speeds of the bicyclists; the bridge will have to connect to the 10-ft wide approaches in Everett and Somerville; and there are existing DCR bridges with a 12-ft wide clearance. The Proponent also indicated that a value-engineering exercise concluded the reduction in width would yield substantial cost savings with minimal impact to the viability of the bridge. I expect that the Proponent will continue to work collaboratively with DCR, MassDOT, MBTA, and other stakeholders to design a project that provides a safe, high-quality shared use path while achieving project goals. Given the regional significance of the bridge, I expect the Proponent and DCR will consider increasing the width of the bridge to maximize this significant investment.

*Wetlands/Waterways/Water Quality*

The Everett and Somerville Conservation Commissions will review the project to determine its consistency with the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA), the Wetlands Regulations (310 CMR 10.00), and associated performance standards, including the Stormwater Management Standards (SMS). The project will impact the following overlapping resource areas: LUO, Coastal Beach, Land Containing Shellfish, Fish Runs, and LSCSF. The existing granite block seawall on the Everett landing will be rebuilt and invasive species will be removed as part of the project. The bridge will be supported by five piles, including three within subtidal waters of the Mystic River, one pile in intertidal waters, and one pile on filled tidelands. Permanent impacts are associated with installation of support piles, bridge abutments, and grading; temporary impacts are associated with the use of cofferdams. The ENF indicated the impact analysis is conservative as it is likely that cofferdams will not need to be used during construction. Comments from CZM identify information that should be provided during permitting to ensure construction of the piles will not destabilize the Coastal Bank. Comments from the Somerville Conservation Commission indicate the project appears to be broadly consistent with their goals of protecting, improving, and celebrating the Mystic River and its adjacent wetlands and parklands. Comments from DMF indicate mitigation for habitat conversion may be required during the federal permitting process. I refer the Proponent to comments from the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) and the Conservation Law Foundation that request any compensatory mitigation be directed locally, not into the in-lieu fee program, and identify potential opportunities for mitigation at DCR's Draw Seven Park.

The project will create 8,276 sf of impervious area. According to the ENF, a grating system within the the bridge deck will discharge stormwater directly to the Mystic River. This portion of the Mystic River is an impaired waterbody due to the presence and/or concentrations of pollutants, including but not limited to: ammonia, *Escherichia coli*, foam/oil slicks, and petroleum hydrocarbons. During permitting, the Proponent should consider a more robust stormwater management system given the potential of pollutants that may result from traffic over the bridge (e.g. trash, dog waste, oil/grease from bicycles). The Proponent should also develop plans for snow removal and surface treatment to ensure year-round use while avoiding impacts to water quality.

The project requires a c.91 License and Permit and a 401 WQC from MassDEP. MassDEP will review the project to determine its consistency with the c. 91 regulations (310 CMR 9.00) and the 401 WQC regulations (314 CMR 9.00). The Proponent may choose to file a combined c. 91 and WQC application with MassDEP (BRP WW 26). I refer the Proponent to comments from CLF, MyRWA, and Boston Harbor Now (BHN) which request that a public hearing be held as part of the c.91 permitting process. The ENF included a discussion of the project's consistency with applicable c.91 regulatory standards. Measures to minimize impacts to navigable waters include: minimizing piles necessary to support the bridge, aligning two piles with existing piles of the proximate MBTA railroad bridge, providing the same navigation height as the MBTA railroad bridge, and aligning the main clearance and passage width of the bridge with the existing navigational channel. MassDEP comments indicate that the project will be classified as a water-dependent use pursuant to 310 CMR 9.12(2)(d) and recommend a pre-filing meeting prior to submitting permit applications. Pursuant to 301 CMR 13.02, I am declining to require a Public Benefit Review for this project. The project is water-dependent and, as such, is presumed to provide adequate public benefits pursuant to 301 CMR 13.04(1). The project's impacts to tideland resources can be adequately addressed during permitting.

### *Climate Change Adaptation*

Executive Order 569: Establishing an Integrated Climate Change Strategy for the Commonwealth (EO 569) was issued on September 16, 2016. EO 569 recognizes the serious threat presented by climate change and directs state agencies to develop and implement an integrated strategy that leverages state resources to combat climate change and prepare for its impacts. The Order seeks to ensure that Massachusetts will meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction limits established under the Global Warming Solution Act of 2008 (GWSA) and will work to prepare state government and cities and towns for the impacts of climate change. The City of Somerville is a participant in the Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program and the City of Everett is currently completing the MVP process. The MVP program is a community-driven process to define natural and climate-related hazards, identify existing and future vulnerabilities and strengths of infrastructure, environmental resources and vulnerable populations, and develop, prioritize and implement specific actions a City can take to reduce risk and build resilience.

Based on its location adjacent to the Mystic River and within the 100-year floodplain, the site is vulnerable to flooding, which may become more frequent and more intense under future climate conditions. The ENF indicated that the bridge will be elevated above current and future 100-year flood elevations and the landings will be elevated above the current 100-year flood elevation. The ENF noted that storm surge, sea level rise, and coastal resiliency planning was incorporated into the design; however, specific measures were not identified. I expect that this will be addressed in more detail during the subsequent permitting process. Special consideration should be given to the design of the landings to ensure the bridge remains accessible during the design life of the structure.

### *Marine Fisheries*

Land Containing Shellfish is deemed significant to the interest of the WPA (310 CMR 10.34) and the protection of marine fisheries. According to DMF, the Coastal Beach provides intertidal habitat for soft shell clam (*Mya arenaria*). This portion of the Mystic River also provides habitat for winter flounder (*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*) and provides spawning migratory habitat for several diadromous fish species, including: alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), white perch (*Morone americana*), American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), and American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*). The DMF recommends a TOY restriction from February 15 to June 30 to avoid impacts to diadromous fish and winter flounder.

### *Construction Period Impacts*

Construction of the project is anticipated to commence in early 2020 and will last for approximately 18 months. The bridge will be pre-fabricated in discrete sections at an off-site location, transported to the site, and lifted into position onto five support piles via barge or land based equipment. I expect that MassDEP will require observance of the TOY restrictions recommended by the DMF and refer the Proponent to the DMF comment letter for additional recommendations to reduce construction period impacts. The project must comply with MassDEP Solid Waste and Air Pollution Control regulations, pursuant to M.G.L. c.40, s.54. All construction activities should be undertaken in compliance with the conditions of all State and local permits.

Conclusion

The ENF has adequately described and analyzed the project and its alternatives, and assessed its potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures. Based on review of the ENF and comments received on it, and in consultation with State Agencies, I have determined that an EIR is not required.

May 24, 2019

Date



Kathleen A. Theoharides

Comments received:

05/07/19	Liza Burkin
05/09/19	East Coast Greenway Alliance
05/12/19	Friends of the Mystic Connector
05/13/19	Bike to the Sea, Inc.
05/13/19	Boston Cyclists Union
05/13/19	Carlo DeMaria, Mayor, City of Everett
05/13/19	Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
05/13/19	The Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation
05/13/19	Medford Bicycle Advisory Commission
05/13/19	WalkBoston
05/14/19	Alan Moore
05/14/19	Cambridge Bicycle Safety
05/14/19	Brad Rawson, Director of Transportation and Infrastructure, City of Somerville
05/14/19	Conservation Law Foundation (CLF)
05/14/19	Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
05/14/19	Friends of the Community Path
05/14/19	Jessica Finch
05/14/19	Karen Molloy
05/14/19	Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
05/14/19	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) - Waterways Program
05/14/19	Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
05/14/19	Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC)
05/14/19	Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA)
05/14/19	Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee
05/14/19	Somerville Conservation Commission
5/14/2019	Boston Harbor Now (BHN)
05/15/19	Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF)
n.d.	Susan Read

KAT/PRC/prc

May 14, 2019

Secretary Matthew Beaton  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

**Subject:** Comments on the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing ENF #16015

Dear Secretary Beaton,

I am writing to provide a critical comment on the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing.

The proposed Mystic River bike/ped bridge is a wonderful project that I have been working on since before the 2009 feasibility study by DCR.

I am very pleased to see this project advance and continue to be a priority for the Encore developer, and for DCR, and we hope that funding can be finalized, both for the bridge and the direct east side connection to the Assembly Orange Line station head house. Improving pedestrian circulation is often the most cost-effective way to increase transit ridership, and could put the T station within walking distance of more of Everett.

However, the planned width of the bridge (only 12 feet) is too narrow for and the large number of commuting cyclists and pedestrians traveling to Everett from the MBTA Orange Line in Somerville

**Therefore, in your Certificate, please require that the bridge width be 15 feet or at least 14 as originally proposed in DCR's presentation and consistent with other recent or in-design projects across Massachusetts** (see the appendix to this letter – this projects will see much less use than the Mystic River bridge – if they can afford it, so can Encore resorts, the DCR and the MBTA):

Multi-use design standards acknowledge that a multi-use path needs 15' for cyclists in both direction to safely pass two pedestrians. Both AASHTO federal and Massachusetts state standards specify a path width of 11-14' for peak for hourly peak user volumes in the 300 to 400+ ranges, which this bridge will likely see:

- *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 4th Edition, 2012*, p131, section 5-3 <http://imentaraddod.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AASHTO-GBF-4-2012-bicycle.pdf>
- MassDOT itself recommends 14' width for 2-way bike lane with Peak Use of 400+ Bicyclists-only/Hour (MassDOT, Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide, page 31 [https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/25/SeparatedBikeLaneChapter3\\_GeneralDesign\\_0.pdf](https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/25/SeparatedBikeLaneChapter3_GeneralDesign_0.pdf))

Failure to provide a minimum width of 14-15' in width will result in an increase in conflict and collisions, which may prove dangerous and even life threatening for users, especially vulnerable users. A clear indication of this is the Minuteman Bikeway, one of the most-used rail trail in the US, which is any user will agree is too narrow even at 12', and which recently experience a death due to a head-on collision.

Thank you for your consideration of this request

Sincerely



Alan Moore



## Width of bike/ped bridges in Massachusetts with less usage than the Comm Path or proposed Mystic River bridge

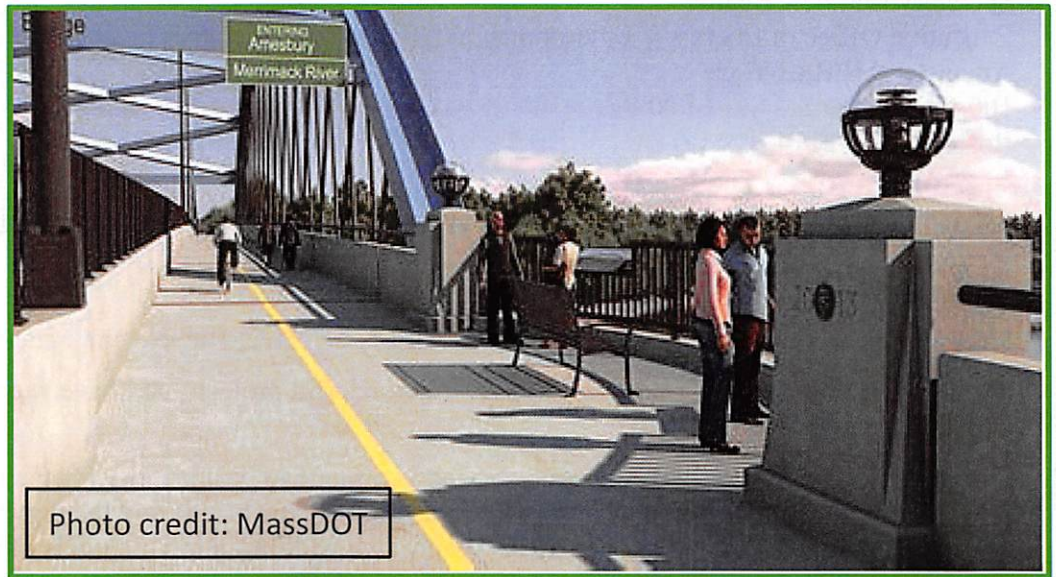
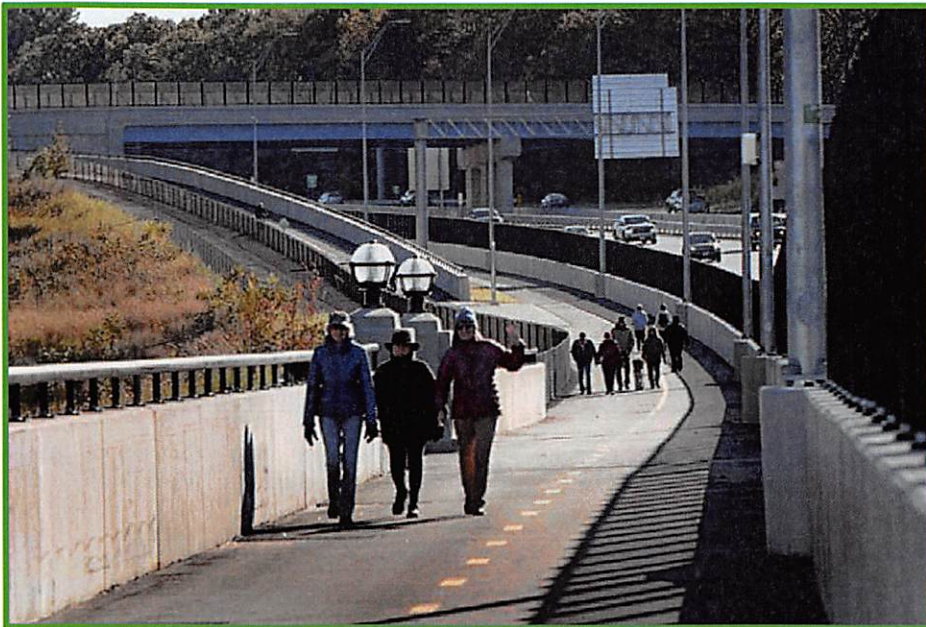


Photo credit: MassDOT



Whittier bridge,  
Amesbury-Newbury,  
MA  
15 feet wide,  
wider rest areas at  
both ends  
(see below)

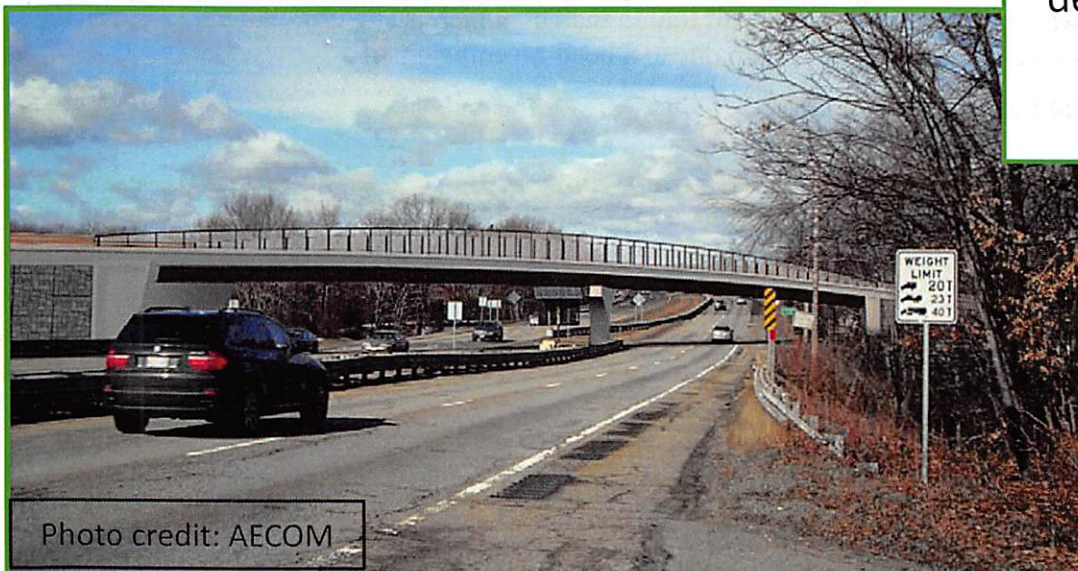


Photo credit: AECOM

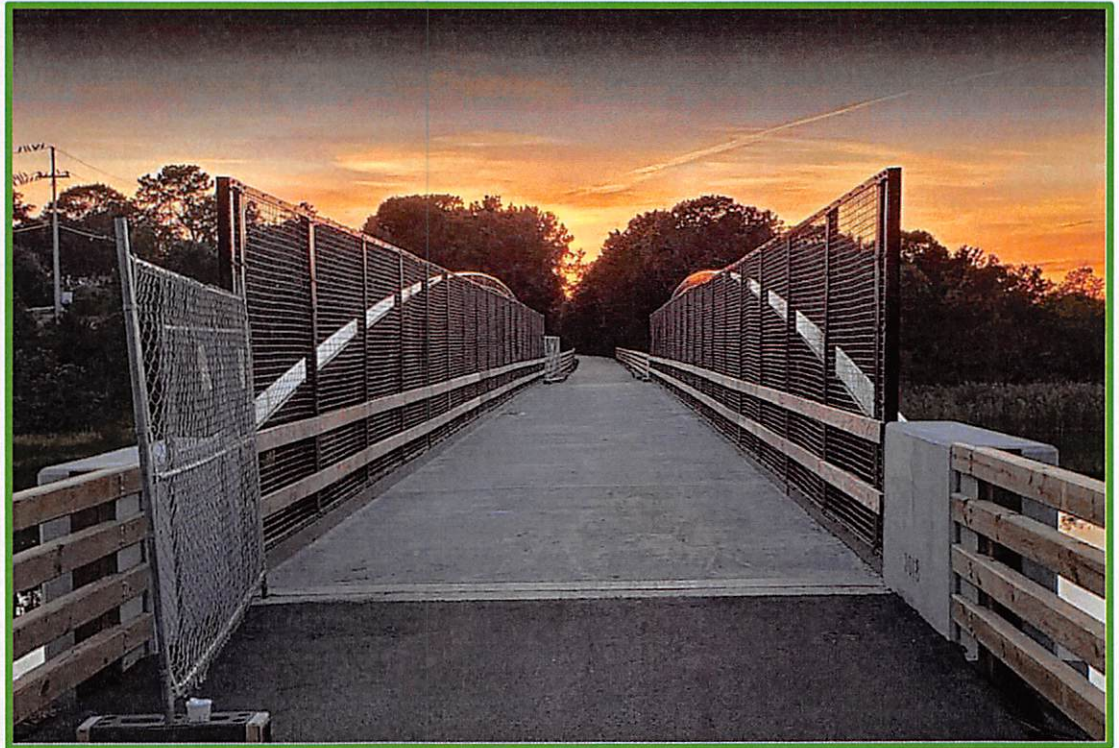
Bruce Freeman Rail  
trail bridge (under  
design) over Route 2,  
Concord, MA  
14 feet wide

Prepared by Alan Moore,  
5/12/2019; Friends of the  
Comm Path,  
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheCommunityPath/>

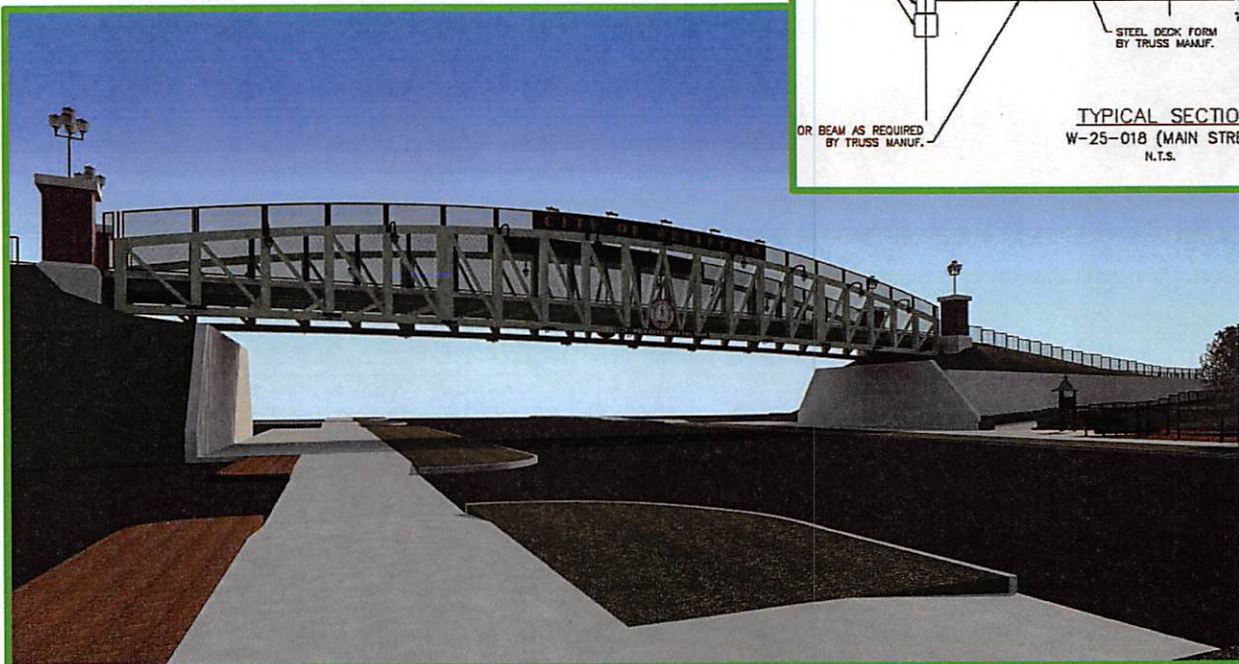
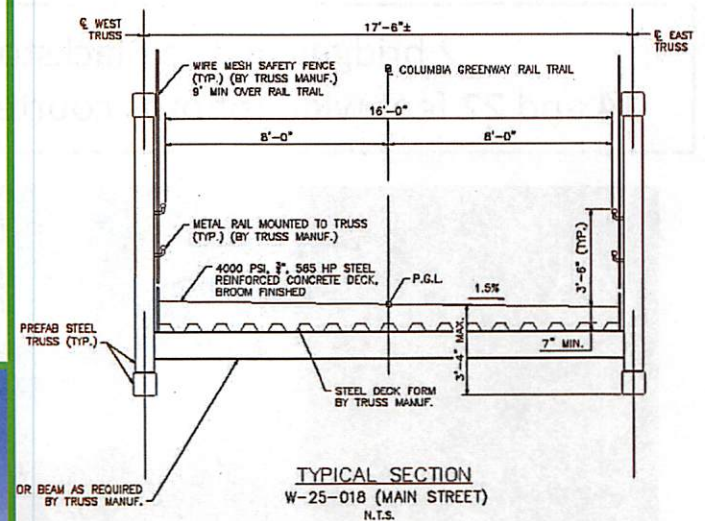


## Width of bike/ped bridges in Massachusetts with less usage than the Community Path or proposed Mystic River bridge

Cape Cod Rail  
Trail, Bass  
River bridge,  
Yarmouth, MA  
**14 feet wide**



4 bridges, Colombia Greenway,  
Westfield, MA  
**16 feet wide**





## Width of bike/ped bridges in Massachusetts with less usage than the Community Path or proposed Mystic River bridge



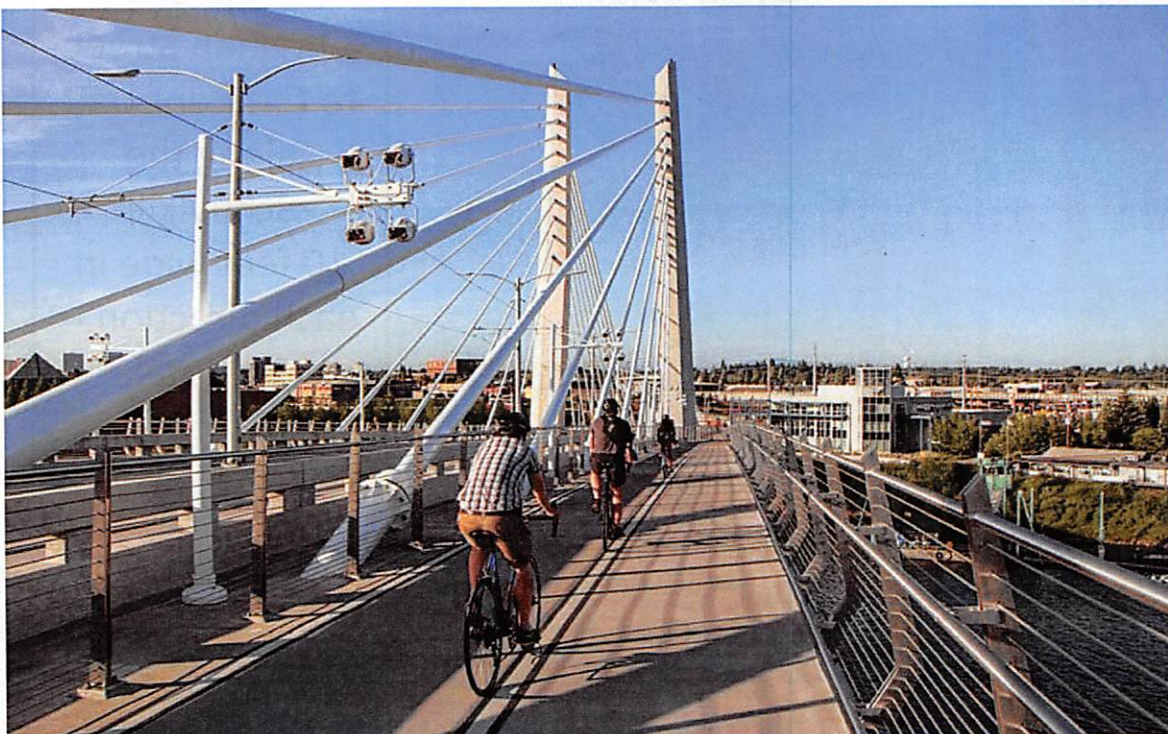
2 bridges on the Blackstone Greenway, Millville, MA  
**14** and **22** feet wide (photos courtesy, VHB and Carol R. Johnson Assoc.)





## Width of other bike/ped bridges in Portland, OR

Gibbs St.  
Pedestrian  
Bridge,  
Portland, OR  
**14** feet wide

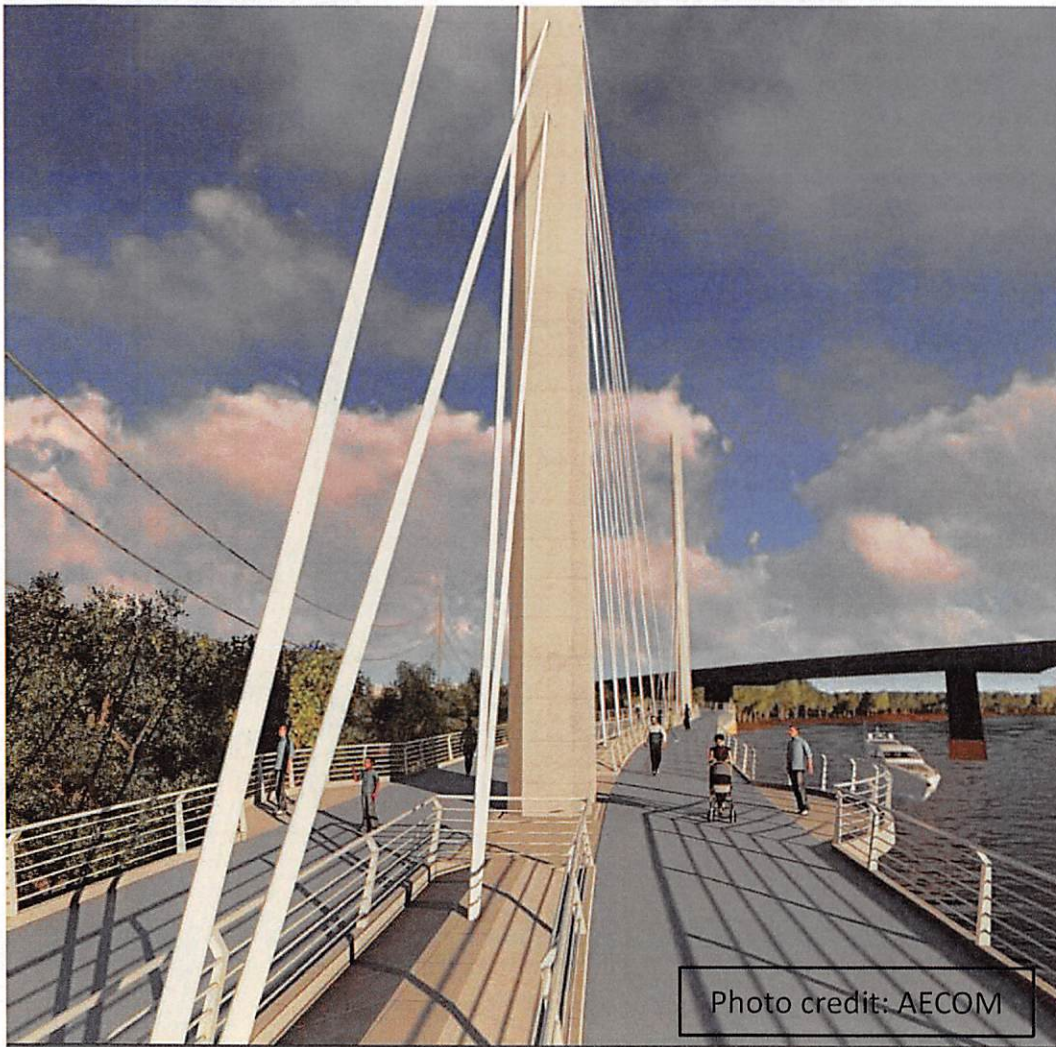
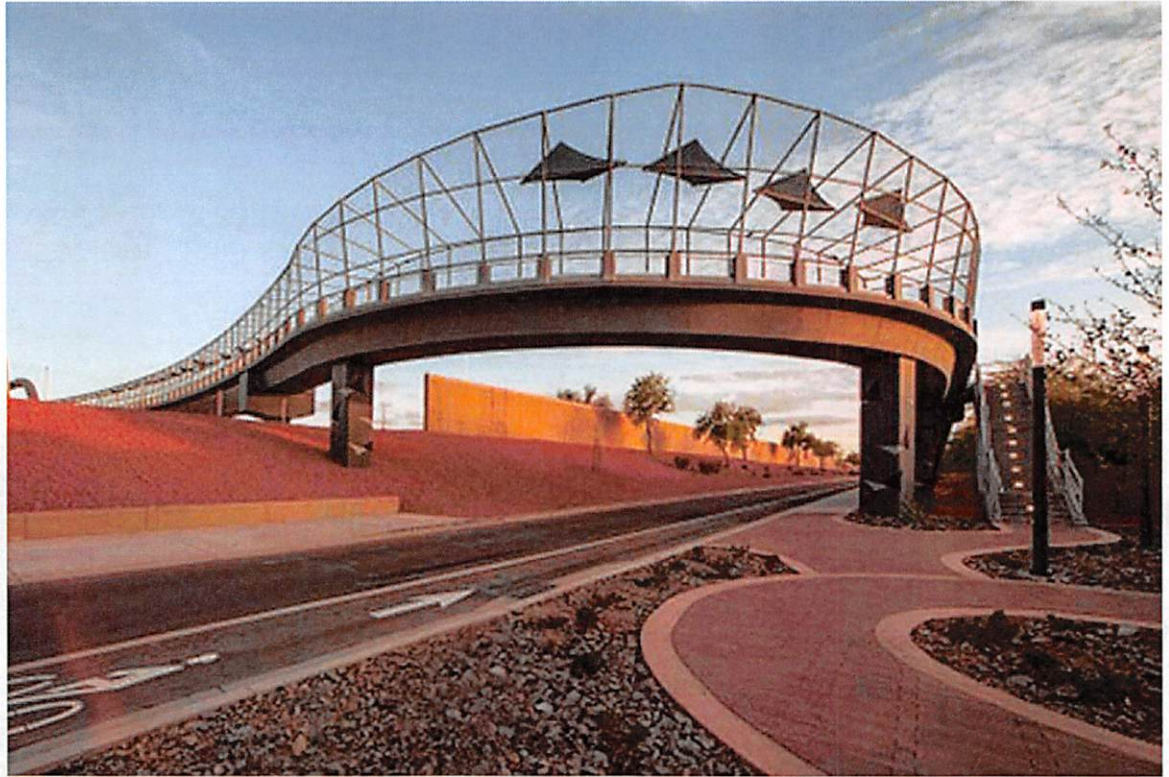


Tilikum  
Crossing,  
Bridge of the  
People,  
Portland, OR  
**14** feet wide



## Width of other bike/ped bridges the USA

Galveston  
(TX) Street  
Bicycle &  
Pedestrian  
Bridge-  
**14 feet**  
wide



Proposed  
Christian Street  
to Crescent trail  
along the  
Schuylkill  
**10 feet** wide in  
each direction –  
**20'** total

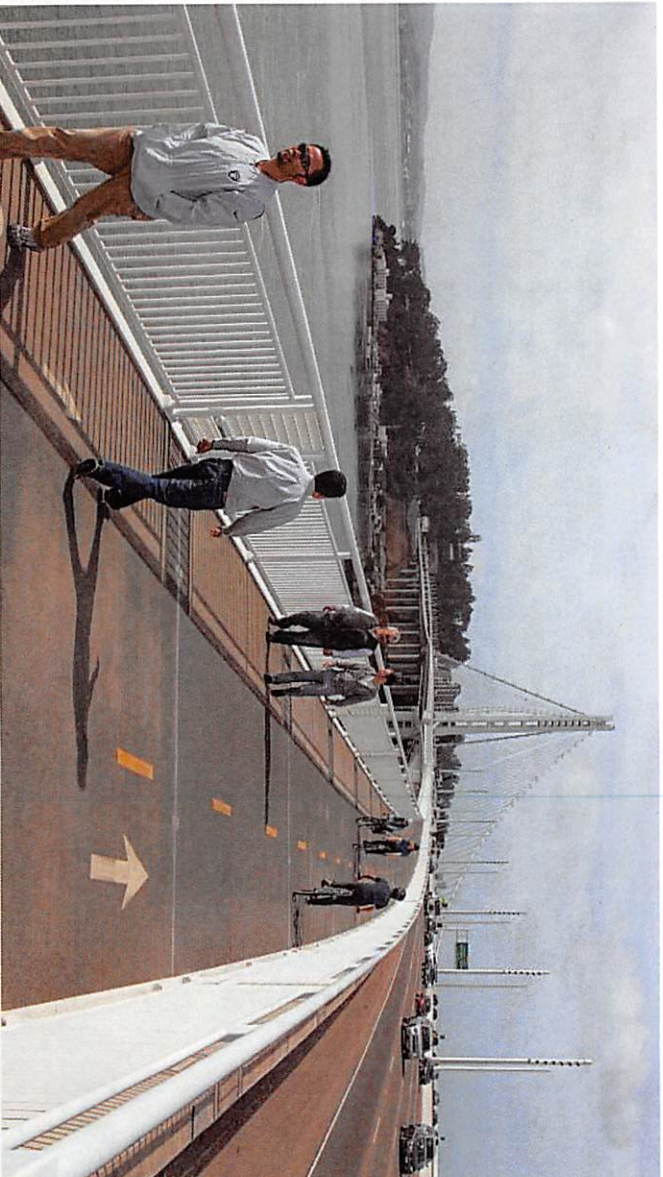
Photo credit: AECOM



## Width of Bike/ped bridges in California



Mary Avenue  
bicycle  
footbridge  
over Interstate  
280,  
Cupertino, CA  
**14 feet wide**

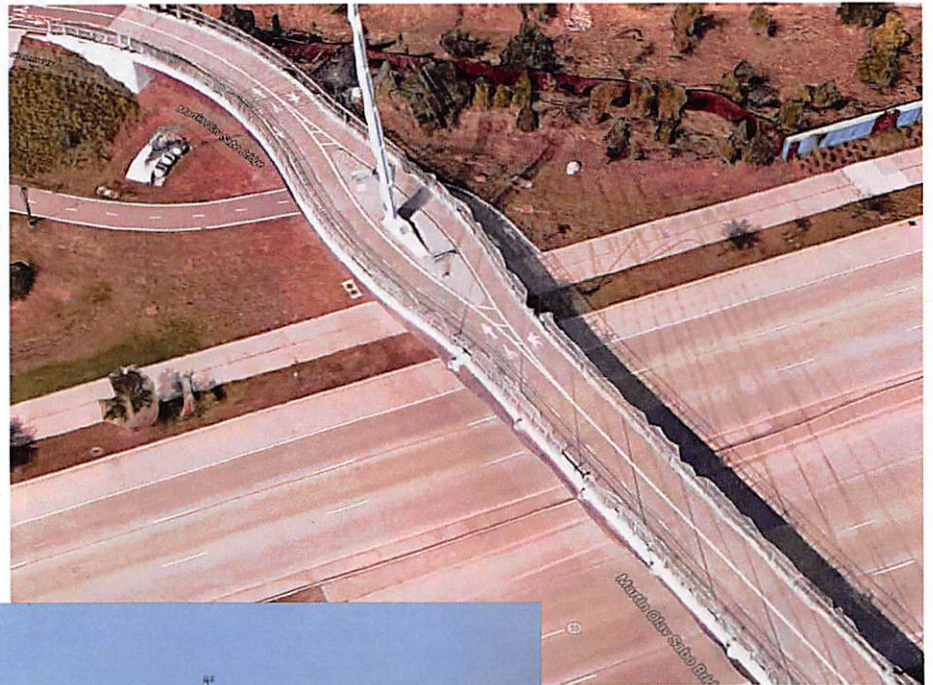


Bay Bridge  
Trail .from  
Emeryville  
to Yerba  
Buena  
Island (San  
Francisco).  
**15.5' wide**



## Width of Bike/ped bridges or viaducts in Minneapolis, MN

Martin Olav Sabo Bridge  
**15** feet wide,  
wide rest area (in center)



Lowry  
Ave.  
bridge  
**12-16**  
feet wide



**Czepiga, Page (EEA)**

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**From:** Stephen Winslow <swinslow4152@biketothesea.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 13, 2019 5:42 AM  
**To:** Czepiga, Page (EEA)  
**Cc:** jay@cobau.net; swinslow4152@gmail.com; claylars@biketothesea.org; amber.christoffersen@mysticriver.org  
**Subject:** Mystic River Crossing Bridge - Comments by Bike to the Sea

Page Czepiga, Environmental Analyst

Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs

100 Cambridge St., Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114

Attention: MEPA Office, reference Mystic River Crossing

Dear M. Czepiga:

Bike to the Sea, Inc. has been the leading advocate for creation of the Northern Strand Trail that would extend from the Mystic River in Everett to Nahant Beach in Lynn. Our organization always envisioned that there would be a need for a Mystic Crossing bicycle and pedestrian bridge that will connect the Northern Strand into the Mystic River trails that will lead from Somerville into Boston and the Charles River. We are excited, supportive and thankful for the effort lead by Wynn Casino to create the Mystic Crossing Bridge.

The Northern Strand runs through the dense urban communities of Everett, Malden, Revere and Lynn as well as the more suburban community of Saugus. The Northern Strand coupled with the Mystic River bridge will create a high-quality connection directly to the Orange Line and job centers in Boston and Cambridge for area that has never existed before. **With more population density than along the Minuteman Trail, the Northern Strand has the potential to be just as, if not more busy.**

The Northern Strands strategic location also makes it a likely connector for on and off-road bicycle routes for communities along the North Shore. Additionally, the Northern Strand has been designated as part of National Bike Route 1 / East Coast Greenway. The regional and national significance of the trail will potentially add even more users.

Given the regional and even national significance of this bridge, projected use of many modes and long span (780 feet), this bridge should be 14-feet, not 12-feet, as are many similar bridges. This will be the only safe, off-road bike/ped connection from North Shore communities to Boston and should be built to the design standards for 21st century bike/ped bridges so it can serve our area until the 22nd century.

Stephen Winslow

Bike to the Sea Board





## **Boston Cyclists Union**

P.O. Box 191710  
Boston, MA 02119  
617-516-8877

Secretary Matthew Beaton  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

May 13, 2019

RE: Mystic River Crossing, Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge

Dear Secretary Beaton,

Between 2016 and 2017, bike ridership rose by more than 30% in Boston, Cambridge and Somerville. Meanwhile, nearly 80% of Massachusetts' urban residents say they want to bike to work, according to a MassDOT survey — though many won't do so unless they have access to safe bike routes. With ridership soaring, and with so much latent demand waiting to be tapped, I urge you to move forward as expeditiously as possible with the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge.

This bridge would fill a glaring gap in the region's bike network, providing riders with a convenient, comfortable route all the way from Somerville to Lynn via the Northern Strand Trail. While there are painted bike lanes on the Alford St. bridge, a dedicated space for cyclists would be much safer and more effective at encouraging people to opt out of their cars; protected bike lanes have been shown to reduce risk of injury to cyclists by 90% while increasing ridership by 75% on roads with new infrastructure.

Through its connection to the Orange Line, this bridge would also enable and encourage far more people to travel by bike, foot and transit. The bridge will allow for "last mile" trips to be made by bicycle and on foot from the Assembly Square MBTA station into Everett, and vice versa. This should be a key consideration given that the area is already choked by congestion and is rapidly becoming more dense with development and the impending opening of the Encore Casino. Sullivan Square and the surrounding areas are already at capacity for cars. Building this bridge as soon as possible would mitigate that traffic concern while helping to move more people more efficiently.

Given the importance of this project and its enormous potential impact, I also urge that the state reconsider plans to winnow the bridge to 12 feet from the original width of 14 feet. This bridge is projected to see strong usage, and with all the development in the area it must be built with room to accommodate future growth. Maintaining the original width would also align with other key completed or in-development regional routes — the Fanny Appleton Bridge, Whittier Bridge, Bruce Freeman Rt. 2 Bridge, Waltham-Wayside Bridge, and Riverside/Charlestown Bridge — all of which

are at least 14 feet wide. If you build it, we know the people biking and walking will come. A narrow path will invite unnecessary conflict and discomfort — let's get this right from the start!

Developers have committed to funding a significant portion of this project, presenting Massachusetts with an excellent opportunity to secure private investment in a much-needed public project. I urge you to seize this opportunity to close a critical gap in the region's bike network, avert a traffic nightmare, and promote a safer, saner and more sustainable transportation network equipped to meet the demands — and desires — of Metro Boston now and into the future.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Becca Wolfson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Becca Wolfson  
Executive Director, Boston Cyclists Union



## Czepiga, Page (EEA)

---

**From:** Cambridge Bicycle Safety <info@cambridgebikesafety.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2019 2:13 PM  
**To:** Czepiga, Page (EEA)  
**Subject:** Widen the Mystic Bike/Ped Bridge Width to 14 Feet

Hi Page,

Cambridge Bicycle Safety is an advocacy organization dedicated to improving bicycle infrastructure in Cambridge, but we have been interested in the proposed Mystic Bike/Ped bridge because it would make cycling safer and more convenient for people who are travelling from Everett, Malden, and other communities to the northeast of Cambridge and Somerville. *Making cycling a viable transportation alternative improves the lives of everyone in the region.*

We appreciate that Wynn Resorts has invested a significant amount of money so far in the design of this bridge and that they have made commitments to cover a significant portion of the capital costs. The state should contribute funding to leverage this private investment.

We feel that the bridge should be 14 feet wide, not 12 feet, because it will provide a critical connection between communities where none currently exists. This connectivity will likely mean a large amount of bike and pedestrian traffic. Because this path is on a bridge, there won't be room to stand or walk to the side with higher volumes of bicyclists and pedestrians sharing the same space. It is particularly important that the path is wide enough to allow all people to pass safely. This will be the only safe, off-road bike/ped connection from North Shore communities to Boston and should reflect design standards for 21st century multi-modal bridges.

Signed,  
George Schneeloch on behalf of Cambridge Bicycle Safety

# City of Everett Office of the Mayor

RECEIVED

MAY 15 2019

MEPA

Carlo DeMaria, Jr.  
MAYOR



Everett City Hall  
484 Broadway  
Everett, MA 02149-3694  
Phone: (617) 394-2270  
Fax: (617) 381-1150

May 13, 2019

Kathleen A. Theoharides, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
Attn: MEPA Office  
Analyst Page Czepiga, EEA No. 16015  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

I am writing to you to offer the City of Everett's full support of the Mystic River Pedestrian Bridge that would connect the Cities of Everett and Somerville. I applaud your office for initiating the study and design of this crossing as part of the MEPA process for the Encore Casino. I also applaud the Encore Casino for advancing this project beyond their stated commitment and developing the Environmental Notification Form submitted to your office on April 16, 2019.

As you know, the City of Everett is the only "Inner Core" community that does not have access to rapid transit or commuter rail. This creates significant challenges as we work to reduce our dependency on automobile travel. During the past several years, Everett has invested heavily in its bicycle and pedestrian network as a means to encourage active transportation as an alternative. In 2019 alone, we will be completing over two miles of physically protected cycle ways and an equal amount of on street bike lanes as well as launching 12 new Blue Bikes bike-share stations. Next year, the City will complete the last segment of the Northern Strand Community path, connecting it to the Mystic River at the foot of future Mystic River Pedestrian Bridge. The completion of this bridge will be transformative in its ability to enable active transportation between the north shore and Boston.

In addition to its regional benefits, the bridge will also be transformative to the wave of development occurring in the Sullivan Square/Lower Mystic areas of Everett, Somerville and Boston. By expanding the pedestrian catchment areas of the new Assembly Row MBTA station, the bridge will enable Everett in particular, to increase the amount of high density mixed-use development along the Route 99 corridor while also reducing the need for additional vehicle lanes and parking spaces. This is critical to helping achieve the state's and the region's long term goals for reducing private vehicle usage as well as bringing affordable housing and many other economic opportunities to our residents.

We are fully supportive of the efforts put forth by the Encore Boston Harbor resort and look forward to being a partner in the completion of this critically important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carlo DeMaria", written in a cursive style.

Carlo DeMaria

Mayor



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
***MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT***  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

GEORGE PROAKIS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 14, 2019

Secretary Kathleen Theoharides  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: Page Czepiga  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

**Re: Environmental Notification Form – Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing (EEA #16015)**

Dear Ms. Czepiga:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the submitted Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the proposed "Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing" project (EEA # 16015), dated April 16, 2019 and published in the MEPA Environmental Monitor on April 16, 2019.

The City of Somerville has been a tireless advocate for public space improvements and low-carbon mobility throughout the Mystic River watershed. The City has played a leadership role in delivering mobility solutions in and around the blossoming Assembly Square neighborhood, facilitating the public-private partnership that financed the MBTA Orange Line Assembly Station, the expanded Sylvester Baxter Park and associated shared-use path network, and the public boardwalk underneath the Route 28 (Wellington) bridge.

The City applauds the Proponent and its state agency partners at the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for advancing a plan to improve regional mobility for people on foot and people on bikes. City staff have participated in the public planning process and interagency coordination related to the proposed bridge. Additionally, the City has been an active and faithful participant in the MEPA-mandated, MassDOT-led "Lower Mystic Regional Working Group" planning process, which emphasized the congestion relief benefits of a robust and redundant pathway network designed for users of all ages and abilities. Throughout those processes, the City of Somerville has encouraged the coalition of regional stakeholders to pursue strategies that to fill several gaps in the public space and shared-use path network along the Mystic River.



Some of these missing links have been recently addressed. The City wishes to acknowledge the important work of the DCR in upgrading the riverside path facility between Route 16 and Shore Drive (spanning the border between Somerville and Medford), and in rebuilding important portions of MacDonald Park's path network in the City of Medford. We are grateful for the interagency investment at the Charlestown bus yard, where the MBTA has partnered with the DCR to design and construct a public multi-use path connecting Route 99 in the City of Boston to Draw Seven Park in Somerville.

Because of these strategic investments, a safe, useful, inviting network of off-street paths connecting Medford Square and Sullivan Square is nearly in the region's collective grasp. Key gaps remain across and under the Wellington Bridge (Route 28). The City has engaged in conceptual planning with state agency partners to install separated bicycle lanes across the Route 28 bridge, proposing to reduce the width of existing motor vehicle travel lanes and re-allocate the reclaimed space to establish a physically separated bike facility in each direction that would relieve the existing 4' sidewalks from carrying both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. We are currently engaged with our partners at the DCR and the Mystic River Watershed Association to redesign bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along Shore Drive at Blessing of the Bay Park. In this holistic context, the proposed Project offers unique value to the Commonwealth, the region, and to the City of Somerville.

Specific comments on the ENF are as follows:

#### Agency Outreach

The Proponent has provided informational briefings for the Somerville Conservation Commission as well as regulatory filings for the Project's exploratory boring program. The Proponent submitted to the Conservation Commission a Request for Determination of Applicability in November 2017 and a Notice of Intent in December 2017. A project update was provided to the Commission in February 2018. A site visit for Commission members and was conducted in August 2018.

The City of Somerville provides staff support to the Somerville Conservation Commission. The City applauds the Proponent's efforts to engage our Conservation Commission early and often throughout the project development process, and we look forward to continued engagement in 2019 and beyond.

The City wishes to acknowledge a new agency stakeholder serving the Project area: the "Assembly Connect" Transportation Management Association (TMA). Assembly Connect was established in 2018 to perform mobility management functions for the Assembly Square neighborhood. A five-member Board of Directors consists of Federal Realty Investment Trust; Partners Healthcare; Avalon Bay Communities; Mystic View Task Force; and the City of Somerville. This new TMA will play a key role in advocacy and planning, as well as in more typical Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program administration. The City looks forward to ensuring that the Assembly Connect TMA is integrated into the wonderful network of partners and allies working to reduce the region's reliance on automobile travel.



Wetlands, Waterways and Tidelands

At the appropriate time, the Proponent would be expected to file a Notice of Intent and seek approval from the Somerville Conservation Commission for any relevant construction activities or operational impacts under the typical Order of Conditions process.

The ENF states that any construction-related impacts to coastal wetlands will be mitigated with new plantings. The City of Somerville has been working in partnership with the DCR and the Mystic River Watershed Association to evaluate opportunities for living shoreline treatments at the DCR's Draw Seven Park; the City will look forward to learning more about these opportunities as they relate to the proposed Project.

Transportation

The ENF notes that the Project will not meet or exceed any review thresholds related to traffic generation. The City notes that satellite parking for motor vehicle trips associated with the casino resort is not permitted in the City of Somerville. The City and its partners at the Assembly Connect TMA have worked diligently to manage parking supply and demand in Assembly Square, in order to reduce motor vehicle travel in and around the neighborhood.

The City of Somerville has installed approximately 15.5 miles of on-street bike lanes citywide since 2003, and has established approximately 1.5 miles of new protected and off-street bike facilities since 2015. Our community endorses the principles of "all ages, all abilities" bicycle network planning, understanding that low-stress and pleasant facilities attract ridership. We are pleased that the Proponent has invested in planning, design and permitting of a regionally-significant bicycle and pedestrian connection which can reinforce the regional renaissance in low-carbon mobility.

The regional congestion-relief benefits of the proposed Project have the potential to be amplified if missing links in the Mystic River path network are filled. Similarly, the City will continue to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle connections to Assembly Square from nearby Somerville neighborhoods such as Winter Hill and East Somerville so that more Somerville residents have safe and inviting connections to the Project site. The City has also coordinated with the MBTA and regional stakeholders around potential expansion of the Orange Line station at Assembly to provide elevator and stair access from Draw Seven Park. Among the potential benefits of a station expansion is the fact that pedestrians in Assembly Square could potentially cross the railroad right-of-way through the station structure to directly access the proposed bridge.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Environmental Notification Form.

Sincerely,

Brad Rawson  
Director, Transportation & Infrastructure  
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development



For a thriving New England

CLF Massachusetts 62 Summer Street  
Boston MA 02110  
P: 617.350.0990  
F: 617.350.4030  
www.clf.org

May 14, 2019

*Via email*

Page Czepiga, Environmental Analyst  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114  
Page.czepiga@mass.gov

Re: Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing

Dear Ms. Czepiga:

Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) submits the following comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, which was submitted to the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) by Massachusetts Property LLC on April 16, 2019. The Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing connecting Everett and Somerville is a critical piece of regional infrastructure and one that will play a particularly important role in improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. This bridge will help to complete the 25-mile Mystic Greenways network and provide a connection for both commuters and recreational users from dozens of North Shore cities to downtown Boston.

In order to realize the full public benefits of this project, we request that the following considerations be taken into account:


- The bridge width should be expanded. The ENF states that the bridge width will be 12 feet, but a 14-foot width is necessary in order to be consistent with current design standards and provide a safe, sustainable transportation option. The bridge will primarily support pedestrian traffic, but will also be used by cyclists and likely by riders of increasingly-popular electric bikes and scooters. The standard width for the Boston Harborwalk is 14 feet, and many other recently-constructed or designed pedestrian/bicycle bridges in the state have a minimum width of 14 feet.
- Connections to public transit should be thoughtfully designed. Despite its proximity to downtown Boston, the City of Everett is not currently served by any T stations, and many other communities north of Boston are underserved by public transportation. Many of these communities are also environmental justice communities that have historically been deprived of the public transportation benefits that have been provided to whiter, more

affluent communities. This bridge will provide a vital connection for residents of these communities to public transit; specifically, the Orange Line's Assembly Row Station. Direct access from the bridge landing in Somerville to the Assembly Row station is critical in order to reduce travel times and maximize connectivity between the bridge and public transit.

- Any mitigation that is required should be directed towards local projects. Restoration efforts are underway along the Mystic River, including at the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Draw 7 Park directly adjacent to the bridge, creating opportunities for reinvestment in local efforts that would further improve environmental health and climate resiliency in this area.
- A public hearing should be held as part of the Public Waterfront Act licensing process. Though not technically required, in the interests of transparency and public accountability, and given the high level of public interest in this project, we request that the Department of Environmental Protection hold a public hearing as part of its Public Waterfront Act licensing process.

Thank you for considering these comments. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [hmill@clf.org](mailto:hmill@clf.org) or (617) 850-1716.

Sincerely,



Heather Miller  
Staff Attorney





THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 800, Boston, MA 02114-2136  
(617) 626-1200 FAX: (617) 626-1240

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Matthew A. Beaton, Secretary, EEA  
ATTN: Page Czepiga, MEPA Unit  
FROM: Lisa Berry Engler, Director, CZM *Lisa Berry Engler*  
DATE: May 13, 2019  
RE: EEA #16015, Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, Everett and Somerville

The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has completed its review of the above-referenced Environmental Notification Form (ENF), noticed in the *Environmental Monitor* dated April 24, 2019, and supplemental information provided on May 2, 2019 and offers the following comments.

### Project Description

Massachusetts Property, LLC proposes to construct a 12-foot-wide, 785-foot-long bicycle and pedestrian bridge over the Mystic River between Draw Seven Park in Somerville and the Encore Boston Harbor resort in Everett. The project would permanently impact 205 square feet (SF) of land under ocean (LUO), land containing shellfish, and fish runs; 299 linear feet (LF) of coastal bank; 13,013 SF of land subject to coastal storm flowage (LSCSF); and 10,104 SF of Riverfront Area. Temporary impacts include 3,337 SF of LUO, land containing shellfish, and fish runs. Dredging for the piers of the proposed bridge would be incidental to the project and result in 552-569 cubic yards (CY) of material for disposal at a site yet to be determined. The proposed bridge would provide an important link in a 25-mile-long bicycle and pedestrian network and enhance non-vehicular connections between Everett, Assembly Station on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) Orange Line, and Assembly Square in Somerville. The preferred design calls for the bridge (beginning at Draw Seven Park) to progress beneath the existing MBTA rail bridge and over an upland pedestrian path, arc eastward and up to its apex at 30 feet above mean high water (MHW), and slope back down to the DCR Harborwalk Connector on the Everett waterfront adjacent to the Encore Boston Harbor, never at a gradient greater than 5%. One column and four V-shaped piers will provide structural support to the bridge deck and accommodate the required 74-foot-wide by 30-foot-high navigational envelope. A portion of the project is located within the boundary of the City of Everett's Central Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan, which was approved by the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) in 2014 and remains in effect.

### Project Comments

#### *Alternatives Analysis*

The ENF and supplemental information included an alternatives analysis based upon a 2009 study by VHB of four potential crossings with the addition of the preferred alternative and consideration of water transportation. One of the four potential crossings is the modification of the existing railroad bridge to accommodate a bicycle and pedestrian bridge, which was initially rejected



for practicality and cost. However, the modification of the railroad bridge should be investigated in more detail as it could potentially avoid or minimize impacts to the environment relative to the preferred alternative while also saving an estimated \$15.5 million.

#### *Coastal Hazards*

The project proposes permanent and temporary impacts to a number of resource areas, including coastal bank. One of the structural columns supporting the bridge is located on the coastal bank in Somerville and Pier 5 is located on top of the coastal bank in Everett; such structures, given their location on or within 100 feet of coastal bank, have the potential to destabilize the bank. During permitting, the proponent should demonstrate that the construction of these structures will not destabilize the coastal banks and should also provide stamped drawings by a professional engineer registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

#### *Habitat*

The ENF indicates that 205 SF of Land Containing Shellfish and Fish Runs will be permanently impacted by the proposed project. The project site is within a prohibited Shellfish Growing Area designation (GBH4.0) and several diadromous fish species, including alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), white perch (*Morone americana*), American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), and American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), utilize the Mystic River during critical life stages. As a result, no in-water or silt-producing activities should be conducted from February 15 to June 30. Work should be conducted from upland whenever possible; barges or floats, when used, should be prevented from grounding at all tides. Upland silt controls and in-water turbidity curtains should be deployed during construction.

#### *Water Quality*

The ENF states that stormwater management measures from nearby developments in both Everett and Somerville may be extended to serve the proposed bridge approaches, if practicable, but that stormwater from the bridge deck will be directed directly into the Mystic River via a grating system. The ENF further states that the project will reduce stormwater pollutants and sediments that would potentially impact the Mystic River, but it is not clear how this is possible without stormwater management measures on the bridge. During permitting, the proponent should consider a more robust stormwater management system given the potential for pollutants that may result from traffic over the bridge (e.g. trash, dog waste, oil/grease from bicycles). The proponent and/or DCR should develop a plan for snow removal and surface treatment to ensure year-round use, specifically additional information regarding the proposed mechanical method of snow removal (i.e., how the snow will actually be removed from the bridge).

#### *Public Access*

The proposed project would provide a unique opportunity for the public to engage with the Mystic River. CZM recommends the proponent consider interpretive and/or educational signage along or at the bases of the bridge for the public to learn more about the history and/or ecosystem of the Mystic River.

#### **Federal Consistency**

The proposed project may be subject to CZM federal consistency review. For further information on this process, please contact Robert Boeri, Project Review Coordinator, at 617-626-1050 or visit the CZM website at [www.mass.gov/czm/fcr](http://www.mass.gov/czm/fcr).

LBE/elh

cc: Rachel Freed, Deputy Regional Director, Bureau of Water Resources, MassDEP-NERO  
Tay Evans, Marine Fisheries Biologist, MA Division of Marine Fisheries  
Ben Lynch, Section Chief, MassDEP Waterways Program  
Barbara Newman, Chief of NED Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers





May 14, 2019

Secretary Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: Page Czepiga, MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Re: EOEEA #16015 Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing ENF

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation ("DCR" or "Department") is pleased to submit the following comments in response to the Environmental Notification Form ("ENF") submitted by Massachusetts Property LLC (the "Proponent") for the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing project (the "Project").

As described in the ENF, the Proponent plans to design, permit, and construct a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the Mystic River, creating a new connection between the City of Somerville at Draw Seven Park (under the care and control of DCR), and the City of Everett near the Encore Boston Harbor Resort. DCR will take ownership of the bridge following completion and acceptance in accordance with a Construction and Access Permit ("CAP") that would be issued by DCR to the Proponent. An easement from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority ("MBTA") will need to be granted to DCR for the landing on the Everett side of the river prior to issuance of the CAP and commencement of construction.

DCR has care, custody, and control over several assets in the vicinity of the Project, in addition to Draw Seven Park in Somerville. The Amelia Earhart dam, operated by the DCR Flood Control Section, is located approximately 500 feet to the north of the proposed bridge. Constructed in the 1960s, the dam is crucial to mitigating upstream flooding and reducing tidal influence. DCR also manages the Mystic River Reservation, consisting of the Mystic River Greenway along 370 acres on both sides of the river through Everett, Somerville, Medford, and Arlington. DCR is separately working with the MBTA to construct a new bicycle/pedestrian path over a new bulkhead wall (EEA #15478) that will enhance access throughout the Mystic River Greenway including Sylvester Baxter State Park, and into Boston and beyond.

DCR is pleased to submit the following comments on the Project:

DCR has long understood the substantial benefits of a bicycle/pedestrian connection over the Mystic River in this general vicinity, to enhance public use of the Mystic River Reservation. As mentioned in the ENF, the Department evaluated four potential crossings in the vicinity of the Amelia Earhart Dam, including alternatives that would modify the dam, create a new bridge, and attaching to the existing MBTA railroad bridge. The study suggested that there were inherent operational difficulties associated with retrofitting the dam or the MBTA railroad bridge that a new bridge would avoid.

In DCR's comments on the Encore Boston Harbor Resort (EEA #15060), the Department encouraged the Proponent to develop a bridge crossing, both from a transportation perspective (reducing vehicle trips on

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600  
Boston MA 02114-2119  
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax  
[www.mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-conservation-recreation](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-conservation-recreation)



Charles D. Baker  
Governor  
  
Karyn E. Polito  
Lt. Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides, Secretary,  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
  
Leo Roy, Commissioner  
Department of Conservation & Recreation

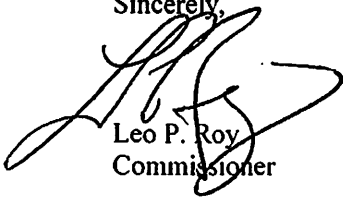
area roadways, including those roadways operated by DCR, through facilitating MBTA Orange Line access), and enhancing recreational resources. Through the MEPA process, the Proponent committed to design conceptually a bridge. Subsequently, the Proponent and DCR have engaged in a productive public process and have elicited, received, and incorporated public input on the bridge design.

The Project will support several separate initiatives in the area, including the Northern Strand Trail (proposed to connect Everett, Malden, Saugus, and Lynn) and the new bulkhead wall trail across the MBTA Charlestown Maintenance facility. When these efforts are completed, the public will have access to a bicycle/pedestrian network unprecedented for the area, and will truly transform the public's engagement with the Mystic River.

DCR is conducting its own design process for Draw Seven Park that will greatly improve the use, vibrancy, and aesthetics of the property. A bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the Mystic River in this location has been planned by DCR for many years. We are extremely grateful to the proponent for advancing this project through design, permitting, and construction, and wholeheartedly support their efforts, which will provide great benefits to the citizens of Massachusetts. The Department looks forward to continued collaboration with the Proponent on this transformational project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ENF. Questions related to the Mystic River Reservation and area bike paths can be directed to Dan Driscoll at (617) 626-1438 or [dan.driscoll@mass.gov](mailto:dan.driscoll@mass.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leo P. Roy', is written over a printed name and title.

Leo P. Roy  
Commissioner

Cc: Dan Driscoll, Patrice Kish (DCR)





David E. Pierce, Ph.D.  
Director

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

(617)626-1520

fax (617)626-1509



Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen Theoharides  
Secretary

Ronald S. Amidon  
Commissioner

Mary-Lee King  
Deputy Commissioner

May 14, 2019

Kathleen Theoharides, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office, Page Czepiga, EEA#16015  
100 Cambridge Street, suite 900  
Boston, Ma 02114

Re: Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, Massachusetts Property LLC

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) has reviewed the above referenced project with regard to its impacts to marine fisheries resources and habitats in the Mystic River. The proposal is to construct a 785-foot long, 12-foot wide and 35-foot high new bike and pedestrian bridge across the lower Mystic River. Planning studies have addressed the need for non-motorized access across the river connecting existing trail networks and providing the City of Everett with access to the MBTA station in Somerville. Project construction is expected to take 18 months and would involve both temporary and permanent impacts to Land Under the Ocean, Coastal Banks, Land Containing Shellfish, Fish runs and Land Subject To coastal Storm Flowage.


Several diadromous fish species utilize the Mystic River in their annual spawning migration to the upper Mystic lakes and beyond into newly available spawning habitat. Migrating species found at the Amelia Earhart locks including alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), white perch (*Morone americana*), American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) and American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*). The coastal beach supports a functioning intertidal soft shell clam (*Mya arenaria*) resource. Winter flounder (*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*) may utilize the area for spawning, larval settlement and juvenile development.

We have the following comments for your consideration:

- Further analysis of alternatives is recommended to fully explore options for access across the river without necessitating construction of a new overwater structure. Construction of a path cantilevered off of the MBTA Bridge would minimize environmental impacts and meet the project goals, while also reducing the overall project costs according to Table 1 of the VHB report.
- Construction of a new overwater structure will result in lasting permanent impacts to the seafloor and therefore may be considered a habitat conversion of tidal land. A permanent impact of this type may be subject to mitigation by the Army Corps of Engineers and other permitting agencies.
- MA DMF recommends a time of year restriction for no in-water work from February 15 to June 30, for the protection of diadromous fish and winter flounder (Evans et al. 2011).
- Silt curtains should be maintained regularly so that they remain effective and a closed environmental bucket or similar is recommended to minimize turbidity impacts during dredging.
- Regardless of which alternative will be constructed, they would all require improved stormwater management of water off the additional surface area of the walkway.
- Recreational fishing access is currently available on the point of land proposed to support the new bridge structure in Everett. MA DMF recommends designing alternative recreational fishing access should the existing site be altered to preclude access.

Thank you for considering our comments. Please call Tay Evans of my staff if you have any questions about this review at 978-282-0308 x. 168 or [tay.evans@state.ma.us](mailto:tay.evans@state.ma.us).

Sincerely,



David E. Pierce, PhD  
Director

DP/TE/sd

Evans, N.T., Ford, K., Chase, B.C., and Malkoski, V. (2015.) *Marine fisheries time of year (TOY) restrictions for coastal alteration projects*. Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Technical Report. TR-47. 28 pp.

cc. B. Gahagen, DMF  
K. Ford, DMF  
M. Johnson, NMFS  
E. Hokenson, CZM  
Fort Point Associates ([jkohn@fpa-inc.com](mailto:jkohn@fpa-inc.com))





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Dennis Markatos-Soriano

May 9, 2019

Paige Czepiga  
Environmental Analyst  
Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114  
Attention: MEPA Office, reference Mystic River Crossing

**RE: Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing**

Dear Ms. Czepiga,

The East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) enthusiastically supports the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing. Constructing this facility would close an important gap in the regional active transportation network and the Massachusetts section of the East Coast Greenway (ECG), a developing 3,000-mile traffic-separated bicycling and walking path connecting communities from Maine to Florida.

The Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing is the key to creating a safe connection from the Northern Strand Community Trail (NSCT) to the City of Boston. Currently, local commuters and users of the East Coast Greenway have to travel on-road from the terminus of the NSCT, over the Revere Beach Parkway/Route 16, and through the parking lot of the MBTA station to reach the safety of the Wellington Greenway. The Mystic River Crossing would provide a direct, safe, accessible, and enjoyable connection between the NSCT and Draw Seven Park and the new multi-use facility currently being built called the "MBTA Walkway." Your support of this project will bring the region one step closer to a traffic-separated active transportation corridor that will reduce traffic congestion and encourage increased multi-modal commuting via biking, walking, & transit.

We also encourage you to consider a 14' wide bridge, rather than the 12' that is currently included in the design. Estimates by AECOM project 2,390 uses on weekdays, with 85% of those users being pedestrians. According to the 2012 *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, "Wider pathways 11 to 14 ft are recommended in locations that are anticipated to serve a high percentage of pedestrians (30 percent or more of the total pathway volume) and high user volumes (more than 300 total users in the peak hour)." We hope you will consider a 14' wide bridge in order to avoid potential conflicts between users and bring the design in line with other similar bridges recently built or in design with widths of 14' (Frances Appleton Pedestrian Bridge & Waltham-Wayside Bridge).





## East Coast



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### Executive Director

Dennis Markatos-Soriano

We applaud the private investment by Wynn Resorts Development, LLC in this important project and we urge the State of Massachusetts to contribute funding to leverage this private investment to help move this project forward. Advancing this crossing will have long-lasting and meaningful impacts on the transportation network, as well as the safety, accessibility, health, and mobility for residents of the North Shore communities, the greater Boston area, and users of the East Coast Greenway.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dennis Markatos-Soriano  
Executive Director

Kristine Keeney  
New England Coordinator





## Friends of the Community Path

112 Belmont Street, Somerville, MA 02143

617.776.7769 friendspath@yahoo.com

facebook.com/FriendsoftheCommunityPath

twitter.com/pathfriends

Via email: Page Czepiga, [page.czepiga@mass.gov](mailto:page.czepiga@mass.gov)

May 14, 2019

Attention: Secretary Matthew Beaton  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
MEPA Office, 100 Cambridge St., Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114

Re: Comments on the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing ENF #16015

Dear Secretary Beaton,

We are writing to provide important comments on the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing ENF. The mission of the Friends of the Community Path is to connect the regional multi-path networks and public transit via a Community Path extension (CPX), being built as part of the Green Line Extensions (GLX). We represent our thousands of supporters regionally so this Mystic River pedestrian and bicycle crossing is critical as well.

The proposed Mystic River bike/ped bridge is critical for linking our communities and the regional greenway network. We are very pleased to see this project advancing and continuing to be a priority for the Encore developer and for DCR. We hope that funding can be finalized, both for the bridge and the direct east side connection to the Assembly Orange Line station head house. Improving pedestrian circulation is often the most cost-effective way to increase transit ridership, and this bridge can put the T station within walking distance of more of Everett.

However, the planned width of the bridge -- only 12 feet -- is too narrow for this location and the large number of commuting cyclists and pedestrians traveling to Everett from the MBTA Orange Line in Somerville

**Therefore, please require, in your Certificate, that the bridge width be 15 feet or at least 14 as originally proposed in DCR's presentation and consistent with other recent or in-design projects across Massachusetts.**

With so many important paths being connected, and key destinations being linked, ridership will more than likely be higher than anticipated as it will provide a missing link for a number of current and ongoing projects: On the north side, it will connect to:

- The extended Northern Strand path, connecting all the way up to Lynn
- Paths around the Encore Boston Harbor resort, and to the resort itself
- The rebuilt Malden River bridge
- The planned multiuse path along Beacham St.



And on the south side, it will connect to:

- The Mystic River paths, soon to be extended past Draw 7 park and into Charlestown
- The Orange Line station, and the bike path adjacent to the Orange Line
- Planned on-street bike lanes into Assembly Square, and to Somerville in general

We are extremely concerned about the bridge being only 12' wide, narrower than most other bridges being built or designed in Massachusetts:

- Bruce Freeman bridge over Route **(14 feet)**
- The Whittier Bridge over the Merrimac River **(15 feet)**
- Cape Cod Rail Trail extension over the Bass River **(14 feet)**
- Four new bridge being built in Westfield **(14 feet)**
- The 2 new Blackstone Greenway bridges in Millville **(14 and 22 feet)**

Both AASHTO federal and Massachusetts state standards specify a path width of 11-14' for peak for hourly peak user volumes in the 300 to 400+ ranges, which this bridge will likely see:

- AASHTO specifies that path widths should be based on Peak User volume and types of use. The projected Peak User volume >300 Bikes+Peds/Hour on the CPX justifies a minimum recommendation of 11'-14' (*American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) [Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](http://imenteraraddod.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AASHTO-GBF-4-2012-bicycle.pdf), 4th Edition, 2012, p131, section 5-3* <http://imenteraraddod.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AASHTO-GBF-4-2012-bicycle.pdf>)
- MassDOT itself recommends 14' width for 2-way bike lane with Peak Use of 400+ Bicyclists-only/Hour (MassDOT, Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide, page 31 [https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/25/SeparatedBikeLaneChapter3\\_GeneralDesign\\_0.pdf](https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/25/SeparatedBikeLaneChapter3_GeneralDesign_0.pdf))

Multi-use design standards acknowledge that a multi-use path needs 15' for cyclists in both direction to safely pass two pedestrians.

Failure to provide a minimum width of 14-15' in width will result in an increase in conflict and collisions, which may prove dangerous and even life threatening for users of the CPX, especially vulnerable users. A clear indication of this is the Minuteman Bikeway, one of the most-used rail trail in the US, which is any user will agree is too narrow even at 12', and which recently experience a death due to a head-on collision.

Thank you for your consideration of this request

Sincerely,

Alan Moore and Lynn Weissman



#16015

RECEIVED

MAY 16 2019

MEPA

Re: Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing  
ATTN: Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
May 12, 2019

To Whom it May Concern,

The Mystic Bridge will be a critical link for the region's greenway and multi-use paths. All of us in the trail advocacy realm greatly appreciate the State's, as well as the private sector's, commitment in ensuring its completion.

The Friends of the Mystic Connector are currently beginning advocacy efforts around the analysis and design of an ~1 mile connection between the Mystic Pathways and Community Path Extension in Somerville (see appendix i).

The Mystic Connector will link hundreds of thousands of residents north of the Mystic River via non-motorized paths to employment centers due south. The Mystic Bridge and a retrofit of the Assembly Row headhouse are at the crux of this vision's realization.

We would like to thank Encore Boston Harbor for moving this forward, and we find it only reasonable that the state should match, to some degree, funding to leverage this *substantial* private investment and ensure its value remains of most important to public use.

Given the regional importance of this path, projected use of many modes and long span (780 feet), this bridge should be 14-feet wide, not 12-feet. See **appendix ii** for projected use and similar bridges. This will be the only safe, off-road bike/ped connection from North Shore communities to Boston and should be reflective of design standards for 21st century bike/ped bridges.

We appreciate the State's time, effort and focus spent on advancing trail development in the state for non-motorized users of all ages and abilities. Thank you for ensuring it reflects the modern design standards, especially for communities historically marginalized from our region's infrastructure and industrial history.

With Warm Regards,  
Friends of the Mystic Connector

Karl Alexander, Volunteer  
[karl.f.alexander@gmail.com](mailto:karl.f.alexander@gmail.com)

Deniz Karakoyunlu, Founder  
[dkarakoy@gmail.com](mailto:dkarakoy@gmail.com)

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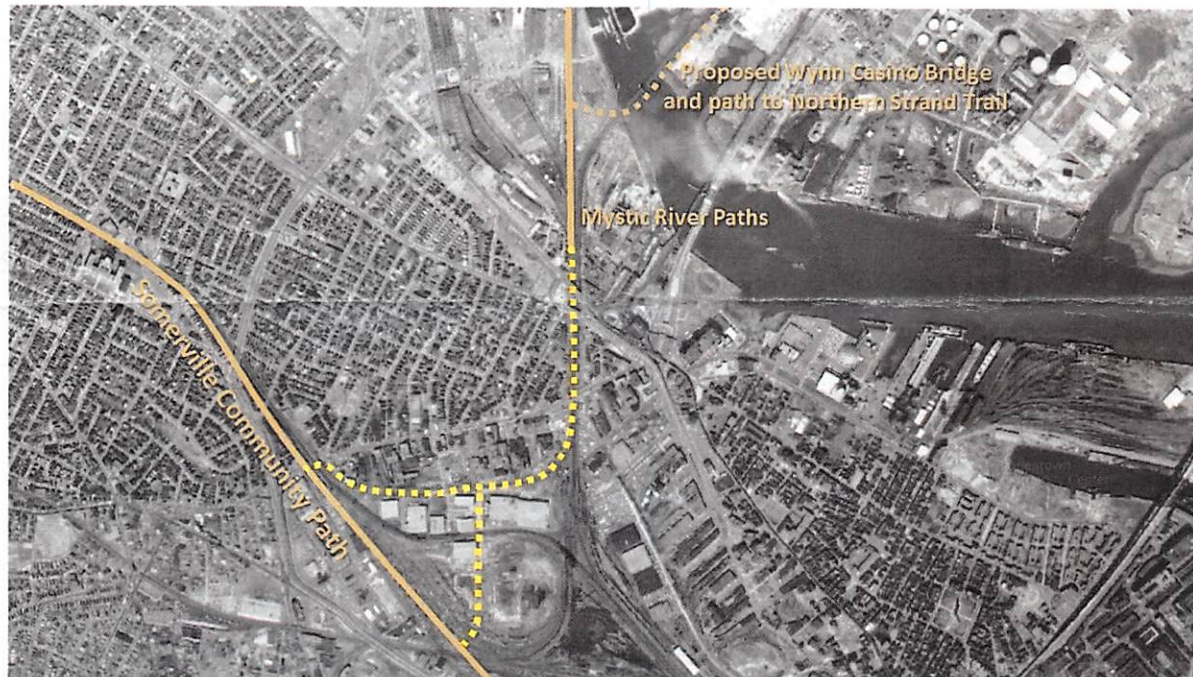
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**Appendix i. Mystic Connector Paths, proposed, in dotted yellow.**



**Appendix ii. Key Statistic and Precedents**

Mystic Bike/Ped Bridge - 12' width, 780' length

Estimated 2,390 user/weekday, 85% pedestrian (these are estimates from AECOM, we believe they will be higher once this connects to the Northern Strand Extension).

Complete 2018: Fanny Appleton Bridge - 14' width, 607' length

Complete 2018: Whittier Bridge - 15' width (vehicular with shared-use path)

In-Design: Bruce Freeman Rt. 2 Bridge - 14' width, 304' length

In-Design: Waltham-Wayside Bridge - 14' width

In-Design: Riverside/Charlestown Bridge - 16' width, 150' length



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## Czepiga, Page (EEA)

---

**From:** Jessica Finch <wunderjes@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2019 11:47 PM  
**To:** Czepiga, Page (EEA)  
**Subject:** Mystic River Bike and Pedestrian Crossing ENF - Comments

Dear Page,

I am a Somerville resident and have lived in the Boston area since 1995. As an artist and designer, I am keenly aware of visual and functional issues regarding wayfinding and placemaking. The proposed bridge provides a critical connection between communities and opportunity for regional placemaking.

I would urge Wynn to consider how signage, art, lighting, and other landmarks can enhance the experience while walking or biking across and might encourage local communities to use and enjoy the bridge. Given its long span, this may have a positive impact on its use. Furthermore, I would encourage the wider 14' minimum design, clearly marked walking vs biking paths, and a connection to the Assembly Row T Station via a headhouse to create better access.

I would like to express my thanks to Wynn for spearheading this project and investing in a thoughtful design.

Best regards,  
Jessica Finch  
24 Maple Avenue, Somerville, MA

## Czepiga, Page (EEA)

---

**From:** K Molloy <kmolloy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2019 11:53 PM  
**To:** Czepiga, Page (EEA)  
**Subject:** My comment on the Mystic River Crossing - ENF #1601

Via email: Page Czepiga, [page.czepiga@mass.gov](mailto:page.czepiga@mass.gov) Secretary Matthew Beaton Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office

Dear Secretary Beaton,

I am excited about the proposed Mystic River bike/ped bridge and pleased to see the project advancement. I hope the funding for the project can be finalized soon.

The bridge would be a key connection for many to the Assembly Orange Line station, and between that intent, the connection to the new encore casino, and the potential for bike connection to the Bike to the Sea/Northern Strand, I believe the 12 ft. width now proposed for the bridge is too narrow. In the Certificate, please require the width to be at least DCR's earlier proposed width of 14 ft. Widths of 14 or better yet 15 ft are standard for this type of bridge, especially for the potential volume and mix for uses this bridge will see.

This project is one of several key connections on the horizon that will boost multi-modal commuting in a congested area. Please ensure this path can be used heavily in the future in a safe manner by requiring a safe width for pedestrians and cyclists.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Karen Molloy

.....  
Karen Molloy  
[kmolloy@gmail.com](mailto:kmolloy@gmail.com)  
197 Highland Ave.  
Somerville, MA  
0214





THE LAWRENCE & LILLIAN  
SOLOMON FOUNDATION

Kathleen Theoharides  
Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114  
Attention: MEPA Office, reference Mystic River Crossing

Dear Secretary Theoharides,

We are grateful to Encore for moving forward with the design of the Mystic River Bike and Pedestrian bridge and for their commitment to fund the lions share of the capital costs. However, we are surprised to hear that, despite a broad consensus on width coming out of earlier public meetings, the proposed bridge design has been value engineered from 14-feet to 12-feet. We recognize that this is a long bridge and an expensive one, but this is not the place to cut back. We ask that you follow the recent MassDOT precedent of *16-foot widths* for shared pedestrian and bike bridges. For example, the Lasell boathouse bridge in Newton, a far less dense community, is being designed to be 16-feet wide. That may sound generous but the accessible portion of a 16-foot wide bridge is really only 12-feet given the buffer needed with the railings. *The usable width of Mystic River Bridge as now proposed is only 8-feet for hundreds of feet.* This usable width will quickly fail to meet mixed-use demand and people will wonder what the current administration was thinking.

Bridges are generally wider than approach paths for a reason: there is no shoulder on bridges for users to pass each other or pause to rest. With Assembly Square on one side of the Mystic River and the Encore Casino on the other, we can expect large groups of pedestrians using the bridge day and night and mixing with commuters and recreational bike riders.

The soon to be built Northern Strand Community Trail, serving a large catchment area with five municipalities, will funnel users to the proposed bridge. The current design of the Northern Strand has been "future-proofed" to allow for widening of the trail to 14-feet as demand rises. It is easy to widen a trail - but not so a bridge. A bridge with 8-feet of usable width would inevitably become a choke point in the Boston metropolitan area's major north/south greenway corridor.

We see big increases in volume coming to shared-use paths. What is changing calculations around width is the current crowding of shared-use paths such as the Minuteman Bike Path fueled in part by the advent of electric assisted bikes and scooters. Electric bikes and scooters are coming fast and promise to shift many more people out of cars and onto multi-use paths. Pedestrians need adequate path width in order to be safe and feel comfortable. Adequate width will induce use, which is critically important for several reasons:

- Commute times in the Greater Boston area are the third longest among US cities. Anything that helps people get where they want to go safely and efficiently should be aggressively pursued.
- Transportation is now the single largest contributor to Massachusetts' greenhouse gas emissions. We need more people using active transportation or going electric.
- Bikes and scooters can help bridge the last mile and get more people onto public transit.
- Car ownership in Somerville and gateway cities to the north such as Lynn is quite low. These folks deserve affordable and convenient choices for how to get around.



THE LAWRENCE & LILLIAN  
SOLOMON FOUNDATION

Given the regional importance of this multi-use bridge we ask that you maintain the commitment to adequate widths.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

*Herb Nolan*

Herbert Nolan  
Executive Director

Cc'd:

Page Czepiga, Environmental Analyst, [Page.czepiga@mass.gov](mailto:Page.czepiga@mass.gov)

Amber Christoffersen, Mystic River Watershed Association, [amber.christoffersen@mysticriver.org](mailto:amber.christoffersen@mysticriver.org)

Jay Monty, Transportation Planner, City of Everett, [jay.monty@ci.everett.ma.us](mailto:jay.monty@ci.everett.ma.us)

Dan Driscoll, Director of the Office of Recreational Facilities Planning, DCR, [dan.driscoll@state.ma.us](mailto:dan.driscoll@state.ma.us)

## Czepiga, Page (EEA)

---

**From:** Burkin, Liza <Liza.Burkin@tufts.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 07, 2019 8:11 PM  
**To:** Czepiga, Page (EEA)  
**Subject:** Mystic River Crossing

Hello Page,

My name is Liza Burkin. I'm a Somerville resident, a Tufts and MIT urban planning graduate student, and a bicycle advocate. I volunteer my time with Boston Bike Party, Femmechanics, the Somerville Bike Committee, and the Boston Cyclists Union – all of which assist and encourage more people to give up their cars and enjoy life in the saddle. I had the pleasure of working with the Mystic River Watershed Association on a project detailing the regional importance of the [Mystic River Greenways](#) last year, where I learned about the efforts to build the vital bicycle and pedestrian bridge over the river.

I just wanted to write and say THANK YOU to DCR and Wynn Resorts for your efforts to bring this dream to fruition thus far. I am thrilled that this investment in a healthier and more accessible future is becoming a reality. Given the extreme importance that this bridge will have for regional connectivity – for people all the way from Lynn to Boston – its funding and design should be held to the highest standards. This means a 14' width like the recently completed Fanny Appleton Bridge. The infrastructure of the Mystic should be just as good as that of the Charles.

Thanks again, and sending best,  
Liza





SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

May 14, 2019

Kathleen Theoharides, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office – Paige Czepiga, MEPA #16015  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, MEPA #16015

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) regularly reviews proposals deemed to have regional impacts. The Council reviews proposed projects for consistency with *MetroFuture*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area, the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles, consistency with Complete Streets policies and design approaches, as well as impacts on the environment.

MAPC has a long-term interest in alleviating regional traffic and environmental impacts, consistent with the goals of *MetroFuture*. Furthermore, the Commonwealth encourages an increased role for bicycling, transit and walking to meet our transportation needs while reducing traffic congestion and vehicle emissions. Additionally, the Commonwealth has a statutory obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 25% from 1990 levels by 2020 and by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050.

The Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing is a key gap in the regional trail network as outlined in [MAPCs LandLine Greenway Vision Plan](#). Therefore when complete, the bridge will receive significant regional bicycle and pedestrian traffic crossing the Mystic River, along with the use generated by the casino and surrounding developments.

We thank Encore for their significant investment in this bridge to move it forward.

We predict that a significant retail and entertainment hub will continue to grow and flourish between Encore, Assembly, and Gateway Center, with the bridge acting as a key connector between these activity centers, particularly with access to Assembly Station.

MAPC strongly supports construction of this bridge, however with some key modifications and requests as follows.

1. The ENF states development of a 12 foot wide bridge to accommodate roughly 2500 users per day when the bridge opens. However, the width is inadequate for the projected number of users, both pedestrians and cyclists. Fast commuters on foot and bike will mix with families and groups of people walking, and lingering on the bridge to enjoy the view. Furthermore, it is stated that seating would be provided within this 12 foot envelope which even further constrains the bridge.

MAPC requests that the bridge is at least 14 foot wide, clear of obstructions like seating, and that the design includes two extended overlooks (or widen to 16 feet) outside of the 14 foot clear area to accommodate an outlook with seating, and room to stand and linger. Please note that 14 feet width is pretty much the standard on recent multi-use bridges within the Commonwealth. The Mystic Bridge we predict will receive even greater use than most of the below bridges. The Fanny Appleton bridge, in addition to being 14 feet wide, has two outlooks.

Recently completed or designed pedestrian bridges in Massachusetts:

- Complete 2018: Fanny Appleton Bridge - 14' width, 607' length
- Complete 2018: Whittier Bridge - 15' width (vehicular with shared-use path)
- In-Design: Bruce Freeman Rt. 2 Bridge - 14' width, 304' length
- In-Design: Waltham-Wayside Bridge - 14' width
- In-Design: Riverside/Charlestown Bridge - 16' width, 150' length

2. Connection to the Assembly Station with a new headhouse on the eastern (Mystic River) side is a key component to achieving the synergy between the river developments and the MBTA. Construction of the headhouse will reduce the walk by 10 minutes from the casino side of the bridge as well as provide a direct crossover of the Orange Line tracks for users connecting to the Assembly Square area. The new headhouse will encourage more use of the MBTA as well as better connect the activity centers. We strongly encourage MassDOT to dedicate funding for the headhouse.

MAPC looks forward to continue working with all of the partners of this project to achieve not only a bridge for the immediate neighbors, but also a significant regional transportation connection for many types of users, as well as an iconic design that will become a key part of the Boston landscape. We anticipate that this project will serve as a leading example for future development projects in other communities to follow.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mystic River Bridge and Pedestrian Crossing. We look forward to reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) once it is issued.

Sincerely,



Eric Bourassa  
Transportation Director

cc: Mayor Brian M. Arrigo, City of Everett  
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone, City of Somerville  
Stephen Woelel, MassDOT



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

## Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

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Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Secretary

Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

### Memorandum

**To:** Page Czepiga, MEPA

**From:** Chrissy Hopps, MassDEP/Boston

**Re:** Comments from the Chapter 91 Waterways Regulation Program — EEA #16015  
Environmental Notification Form – Massachusetts Property, LLC – Mystic River  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, Filled and Flowed Tidelands of the Mystic River,  
Everett and Somerville, Middlesex County

**Date:** May 14, 2019

---

#### **Project Description:**

The Department of Environmental Protection Waterways Regulation Program (the “WRP”) has reviewed the referenced Environmental Notification Form (ENF) (EEA #16015), submitted by Fort Point Associates, Inc. on behalf of Massachusetts Property, Inc. (the “Proponent”) on April 16, 2019 to construct a 12-foot wide pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Mystic River. The proposed project site is located in and over filled and flowed tidelands of the Mystic River, between Draw Seven State Park at Noonan Place in Somerville on the south and extending north adjacent to the MBTA Commuter Railway bridge to 1 Horizon Way in Everett, Middlesex County, (the “proposed project site”).

#### **Chapter 91 Jurisdiction:**

The project is located in and over filled and flowed tidelands of the Mystic River and will therefore require authorization through a Chapter 91 Waterways Program (c.91) license and dredge permit. A portion of the project site is located within the planning area subject to the City of Everett’s Central Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan and the Secretary’s decision thereon.

#### **Water Dependency:**

Based on the WRP review of the ENF, the project appears to be water-dependent in accordance with 310 CMR 9.12(2)(d).



### **Chapter 91 Regulatory Analysis:**

Section 4.4.2 of the ENF represents the Proponent's assessment of the proposed project's compliance with c.91 regulatory standards. Although WRP staff do not fully concur with the assessment, staff did not identify any substantive concerns related to the proposed project and believe this can be addressed as part of the c.91 application process. Upon submittal of a c. 91 application, the WRP evaluation of the application will include a review for conformance with all applicable performance standards at 310 CMR 9.00. Because this project includes dredging of more than 100 cubic yards it triggers a 410 Water Quality Certification (WQC) for dredging. The Proponent may choose to submit a MassDEP BRP WW26 Combined Application for a c.91 license, permit and a WQC, in-lieu of filing separate applications.

Pursuant to 310 CMR 9.11(3)(a) an applicant for a license or permit shall submit a written application on the forms provided by the Department, signed by the applicant and the landowner if other than the applicant. Please ensure the Waterways License Application is properly executed by all applicants and all landowners of the properties where the project will occur.

It is recommended that the Proponent coordinate a pre-application meeting with the WRP. The WRP looks forward to pre-application coordination and receipt of a Water-Dependent Application submitted by the Proponent for the proposed project. If you have any questions regarding the WRP comments, please contact Chrissy Hopps at [Christine.Hopps@mass.gov](mailto:Christine.Hopps@mass.gov) or at (617) 348-4084.



Charles D. Baker, Governor  
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor  
Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary & CEO



May 14, 2019

Kathleen Theoharides, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114-2150

RE: Everett: Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing – ENF  
(EEA # 16015)

ATTN: MEPA Unit  
Page Czepiga

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, I am submitting comments regarding the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing in Everett and Somerville, as prepared by the Office of Transportation Planning. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact J. Lionel Lucien, P.E., Manager of the Public/Private Development Unit, at (857) 368-8862.

Sincerely,

David J. Mohler  
Executive Director  
Office of Transportation Planning

DJM/jll

cc: Jonathan Gulliver, Administrator, Highway Division  
Patricia Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, Highway Division  
Neil Boudreau, Assistant Administrator of Traffic and Safety Engineering  
Paul Stedman, District 4 Highway Director  
Department of Planning and Development, City of Everett  
Department of Planning and Development, City of Somerville  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority  
PPDU Files





Charles D. Baker, Governor  
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor  
Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary & CEO



## MEMORANDUM

TO: David J. Mohler, Executive Director  
Office of Transportation Planning

FROM: J. Lionel Lucien, P.E., Manager  
Public/Private Development Unit

DATE: May 14, 2019

RE: Everett - Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing – ENF  
(EEA #16015)

The Public/Private Development Unit (PPDU) has reviewed the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the proposed Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing project in Everett and Somerville submitted by Massachusetts Property, LLC (the "Proponent"). The project proposes to construct a 12-foot wide pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Lower Mystic River that would connect the Somerville and Everett communities. According to the ENF, the project will facilitate movement between various neighborhoods, commercial areas, public green spaces, transportation nodes, and more importantly provide pedestrian access from Everett to the Orange Line MBTA Assembly Row Station. The project, as proposed, does not trigger transportation thresholds for MEPA review; however, a license will be required from the MBTA for work on MBTA properties and a land transfer is required from the MBTA to the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

MassDOT generally believes that a pedestrian bridge properly designed in relationship to the existing transportation infrastructure would provide a significant regional benefit by providing alternative travel options between Everett and Somerville and communities beyond. However, our review of the ENF has identified a number of issues and concerns that the Proponent needs to adequately address before the project can move forward.

### Responsibility for Project Implementation

The pedestrian bridge was identified in the transportation study for the Wynn Everett Casino project (EEA#15060), now Encore Boston Harbor, as a regional improvement for pedestrian and bicycle travel that would link Everett and Somerville. Massachusetts Property, LLC as the Proponent of the EBH committed to provide \$250,000 to DCR for planning and engineering services toward the possible pedestrian bridge crossing as part of its Section 61 Finding. The bridge crossing project was also a recommendation of the Lower Mystic Regional

Working Group (LMRWG) study to create a high-quality shared use path system throughout the Lower Mystic area and surrounding communities.

The ENF did not provide an explanation as to the reason why the Proponent has taken the responsibility for the environmental filing for this project given that the ENF assumes that the project will ultimately be owned and maintained by DCR. Although the Proponent committed to provide funding to DCR for the study, the ENF did not address whether the Proponent sought and received the approval of DCR for this filing. In addition, it is unclear to MassDOT why the environmental filing for this project is completely separate from the filing of the EBH project since the proponents are the same and given the nexus between the two projects. Finally, the ENF did not specify the source of funding for the construction of the pedestrian bridge. We are also confused about the relationship between the ENF and the application recently submitted to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission for design funds by the Cities of Everett and Somerville.

### **Relationship with the Boston Encore Harbor project**

The new pedestrian bridge was acknowledged in the EBH Section 61 Finding as a potential mitigation measure for the casino project. If constructed, it would enable an attractive alternative for both casino patrons and employees using transit to disembark at the Assembly Row Station and walk to the casino facility instead of exiting at the MBTA Sullivan Square Station to walk on Broadway (Route 99) or exiting at Wellington Station to use the proposed Encore Boston Harbor Casino shuttle. The ENF did not address how many transit riders may elect to use this access alternative or how this potential shift in access to the EBH site would impact Orange Line operations, the MBTA station capacity, or future needs for the shuttle system at Wellington Station. While MassDOT generally concurs that the proposed structure would provide safer connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists, potentially reduce the number of bus shuttles in the roadway network, improve bicycle regional connectivity, and improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the EBH facility, the Proponent needs to provide more detailed information or potentially additional analysis to clarify whether this project would necessitate any modifications to the mitigation program identified for the EBH project.

### **Coordination with future MBTA projects:**

As indicated in the ENF, the MBTA identified a possible future Silver Line alignment that would run adjacent to the existing commuter rail bridge. The MBTA requested that a corridor with sufficient width remain open to accommodate a future Silver Line route in this area. The Proponent indicates in the ENF that its conceptual design provides a minimum of 30 feet between the existing commuter rail bridge and the Crossing, except for the pedestrian crossing under the rail bridge. The Proponent indicates that it has determined that a future Silver Line bridge could pass over the Crossing with a relatively short span and still reach the grade of the existing commuter rail bridge within approximately 50 feet. The MBTA has not seen design drawings or plans with a sufficient level of detail to convince us that the Crossing will not negatively affect any future Silver Line route. The Proponent needs to demonstrate to the MBTA's satisfaction that the Crossing will be designed in such a way as to continue to allow for the safe, efficient and accessible operations of a Silver Line vehicle. While we realize that

various designs could ensure that the Crossing does not preclude a future Silver Line operation, the MBTA needs to determine whether the Crossing design, as envisioned, makes the design, construction or operations of a future Silver Line more difficult, more onerous or more expensive.

The Proponent needs to provide additional detail to demonstrate what the effects this Crossing will have on a future Silver Line corridor and the steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate those impacts. To that end and to minimize impacts to the river, the MBTA would prefer a singular structure that serves both non-motorized and transit needs. If that combined structure is not technically possible, the MBTA requests that the piers, footings and abutments be located, sized and constructed to support the installation of a future transit bridge thereby negating the need for additional work and permanent obstructions in a navigable waterway.

### **Construction Coordination with MBTA facilities**

The project will require significant new construction and construction equipment, as well as utility work adjacent to MBTA facilities and infrastructure. The Crossing will go under the MBTA's Commuter Rail Bridge and additional work will occur adjacent to the Orange Line and Assembly Station, as well as the MBTA's Charlestown Maintenance Facility Campus. The Charlestown Maintenance Facility is one of the MBTA's major maintenance campus and the work performed at these facilities is critical to its ability to provide service every day. Critical activity occurs not only inside the buildings but outside as well, so any impacts on this area could potentially interfere with MBTA operations. Additionally, the MBTA is currently making major improvements to the Orange Line to increase service and as such, any significant impact to service would reduce the benefit of these improvements. To do this work, safe operations of the transit lines and the maintenance facility as well as a safe environment for patrons and workers must be maintained at all times.

The MBTA requests a Construction Management Plan (CMP) that is designed to minimize impacts to MBTA service and its passengers. The MBTA recognizes that the Proponent is at an early stage of planning and design and as such, a CMP at this phase will be less detailed than it would be at a later stage. The MBTA requests that this CMP be regularly updated as the design of the project and the proponent's coordination with MBTA advances. The CMP should provide an outline of the program for the circulation and review of design plans to the MBTA for those elements of the project that directly affect or are in proximity to the MBTA stations, track, bridges or maintenance facilities. It is important that the MBTA has adequate time to review and comment on plans early in the design development as well as prior to construction. If the MBTA has comments, these comments will be adequately addressed prior to work beginning.

The Proponent's CMP will need to have a strong focus on how it plans to build the Crossing without adversely affecting MBTA Commuter Rail operations. The proponent will need to closely coordinate design and construction planning with both the MBTA and its Commuter Rail operator (Keolis). There will also be significant coordination necessary with the MBTA related to any construction operation as well as permanent conditions due to the Crossing



landing at the back of the MBTA Charlestown campus property and passing below the Commuter Rail Bridge. There is a potential for significant impacts on MBTA operations if the project is not properly designed, planned and managed.

### **Accessibility**

The ENF provides very little information about how pedestrians or bicyclists will passengers will connect the MBTA stations to the Crossing. To maintain, and in fact to maximize the transit usage from the Crossing, the proponent must ensure that there is a safe, accessible, welcoming path of travel for passengers coming from the Crossing to the MBTA station. There is limited information in the ENF explaining this connection. The ENF refers to a *"potential future North Headhouse at the MBTA Assembly Orange Line Station."* The MBTA understands that this potential Headhouse is not part of the Crossing project. We are also aware of extensive and recent discussions between MassDOT, MBTA, DCR and the proponent regarding steps that can be taken to advance this separate project.

The ENF however, appears to assume that the Headhouse will be in place. The proponent should understand that while the MBTA is interested in advancing this North Headhouse proposal, there are currently no plans underway or funds in the MBTA capital plan to build this Headhouse. As a result, the Proponent should indicate how the pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing the Crossing would access the MBTA Station (as it currently exists.) The MBTA needs to ensure that any project that involves or is connected to MBTA infrastructure is designed in such a way as to avoid any conflict with federal and state regulations, as well as MBTA standards, policies and commitments, regarding full access to people with disabilities. As currently configured, the Assembly Station is fully accessible. It is critical that the proponent provide more detail design drawings demonstrating how the connection from the Orange Line Station to the Crossing will maintain that level of accessibility and if possible, enhance the accessible paths for all customers using the Assembly Station. The MBTA requests that the proponent continue to do its design development in conjunction with the MBTA. The proponent should meet with MassDOT and the MBTA as soon as the proponent is able to provide a design of the route and path that passengers will use to get from the Station to the Crossing (and vice versa). The proponent should explain how the paths are designed, built and maintained to ensure that they are continually accessible. The proponent should provide information on type of surfaces, materials, dimensions, lighting, signage, landscaping and other pedestrian elements that contribute to a successful connection to the station.

The plans and any accompanying graphics should also indicate the dimension that these paths of travel will occur on MBTA property and what the proposed real estate acquisition is to build this infrastructure.

### **MBTA Real Estate Issues**

The ENF states that a land transfer to DCR is planned. The MBTA will provide a conservation restriction for the shoreline connection in Somerville. The MBTA has been working with DCR for several years on this project. This conservation restriction will be along

the shore of the Mystic River on the north end of the MBTA Charlestown Maintenance Facility above the currently reconstructed seawall project. The conservation restriction will connect Draw 7 Park in Somerville to the Route 99 Bridge in Charlestown. This easement will be given to DCR at the completion of the seawall project (Fall 2019). MBTA is currently working with DCR to coordinate the construction of DCR's surface level path. The Crossing appears to require additional or different interests in real estate over and above what has been contemplated by the MBTA for the surface level easement. The Crossing over the MBTA property and under the MBTA Commuter Rail Bridge would require a different easement since it is outside of the footprint of the anticipated easement. The proponent should provide a plan to the MBTA that shows all interests in real estate (both temporary and permanent) that will be needed for DCR's work in the area. The proponent should work with the MBTA's Office of Real Estate Management to secure these easements.

Given that the project does not trigger an EIR, the Proponent should continue working with the MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning, the MBTA, and DCR. There are a substantial amount of issues and concerns that remain to be addressed to advance the implementation of this project. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (857) 368-8862.



## Medford Bicycle Advisory Commission

Medford City Hall  
85 George P. Hassett Dr.  
Medford, MA 02155

Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office  
Page Czepiga, Environmental Analyst  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

May 13, 2019

RE: Mystic River Crossing project

Dear Secretary Theoharides,

Mystic River Crossing is a project that we have enthusiastically supported from the time that it was first proposed. A bridge at that location on the river will greatly improve connectivity between all the cities within our watershed. It will provide greater access to jobs at Encore Boston Harbor and other nearby employers, expand opportunities for active outdoor recreation, and make shopping and transit easier to get to, all without having to drive, which is very good for Medford.

We are most impressed with the aesthetics of the bridge's design and think that it will become a wonderful attraction, not only as a travel corridor, but also as a destination in itself; which brings up an aspect of the proposed design about which we have some concerns.

We feel that the 12 foot width is not adequate to safely accommodate those who will use it to cross the river by foot, bike, wheelchair, electric scooter, or using new micro-mobility options that will no doubt be introduced in the future.

This diverse mix of modes, combined with the wide range of operating skills and experience commonly found among users of multi-use paths, is an invitation for conflict. With the addition of people whom it is expected will linger on the span to appreciate the views, the safety hazard increases.

This concern is not abstract, but is informed by our experiences on the nearby bike paths to our east and west: the Northern Strand Community Trail and the Minuteman Bikeway. When suggesting car-free places to ride, we enthusiastically recommend both of these terrific



resources. But for families with young children, or less experienced riders, we often caution them that the volume of traffic, the speeds at which some cyclists travel, and the mix of modes on the Minuteman are something for which they should be prepared; and then we encourage them to try the Northern Strand.

As we're sure you are aware, there was a recent fatal collision between two cyclists on the Minuteman. A death on a multi-use trail is an exceedingly rare event, but crashes, which are often minor, and sometimes more severe to the point that injuries are sustained, are not.

The Medford Bicycle Advisory Commission is dedicated to making bike riding safe, useful, and fun. We have every reason to believe that Mystic River Crossing will help increase the utility of non-motorized transportation in our area and create an exciting new feature on our river, but it must do so while remaining as safe as is possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Bibbins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patrick" being more prominent than the last name "Bibbins".

Patrick Bibbins, Chair  
Medford Bicycle Advisory Commission  
medfordbikes@gmail.com

Cc: Amber Christoffersen, Mystic River Watershed Association  
Stephanie M. Burke, Mayor of Medford



May 14, 2019

Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
Attn: MEPA Office  
Page Czepiga, EEA No. 16015  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Re: EEA No. 16015  
Everett and Somerville - Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission ("Commission"), I submit the following comments regarding the Environmental Notification Form for the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing project ("Pedestrian Bridge") that was submitted by Massachusetts Property, LLC in coordination with the Department of Conservation and Recreation ("DCR"). The Commission supports this project that could provide significant long-term regional transportation benefits.

As you are aware, many local and state agencies, including the Commission, community representatives, and groups such as the Mystic River Watershed Association have worked diligently to study the potential location and design of a pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the Lower Mystic River. Commission staff participated as stakeholders in the design of the Pedestrian Bridge that was presented by DCR in early 2018. As shown in studies, the Pedestrian Bridge has a great potential to connect communities with non-vehicular pathways. Additionally, the Pedestrian Bridge was described in the Report of the Lower Mystic Regional Working Group, which was led by MassDOT and included participants such as the EOHED, MAPC, CTPS, the Attorney General's Office, the Commission, Encore Boston Harbor, and the cities of Boston, Everett, and Somerville. The Lower Mystic Regional Working Group Report advocated the continuation of developing a "high-quality, shared-use path system throughout the Lower Mystic area and surrounding communities. Foremost among these improvements is a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Mystic River, connecting Assembly Row to the Encore resort."

The Commission, through the Community Mitigation Fund, has encouraged the development of a regional active transportation network with bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths by awarding



Massachusetts Gaming Commission

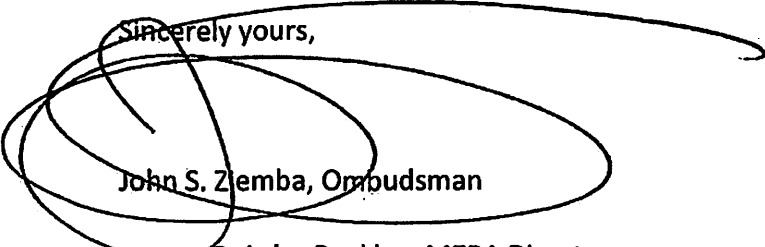
Kathleen A. Theoharides, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Page Czepiga, EEA No. 16015  
Page 2  
May 14, 2019

funding for a planning study to the city of Everett to extend the Northern Strand Bike path which extends through Everett, Saugus, Revere, Lynn, and Malden. Further, in 2017, the Commission awarded funding to Medford "... for an engineering feasibility study for a proposed new multi-use path. A new multi-use path (the South Medford Connector) may greatly enhance connections to other regional pathways and provide another method for employees and patrons to access the casino." Additionally, in order to improve the utilization of the proposed Pedestrian Bridge, the Commission issued a joint grant to the cities of Everett and Somerville to design a Connector from Draw Seven Park to the Assembly Station Head House.

Given this background, I extend the Commission's strong support for this important project that would provide significant regional transportation benefits to the area.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely yours,



John S. Ziemba, Ombudsman

cc: Deirdre Buckley, MEPA Director  
MGC Commissioners  
Edward R. Bedrosian, Jr., Executive Director  
Catherine Blue, General Counsel





May 14, 2019

Page Czepiga, Environmental Analyst  
Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Attention: MEPA Office, reference Mystic River Crossing  
By Email: [Page.czepiga@mass.gov](mailto:Page.czepiga@mass.gov)

Dear Page,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mystic River Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing. We enthusiastically support this important infrastructure project and commend Encore Boston Harbor and DCR for their efforts to move towards implementation. Mystic River communities have been waiting for over a decade for this connection – we're grateful to have these partners to turn ideas into reality.

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Mystic River watershed. This includes working to improve the water quality in the Mystic River and its tributaries and promoting public access through the formation of continuous greenways for recreation and transportation. We believe that these efforts will improve public health, the environment, and economy of Mystic River communities.

We would like to thank Encore Boston Harbor for providing the funding and project management capacity to move this through design and permitting. Given this investment — and a commitment to providing a significant amount towards the capital cost — we would **urge the state allocate funding to leverage this private investment**. Public-private partnerships are critical in funding this type of infrastructure. As Dante Ramos stated in his Boston Globe article from February 23, 2018:

"Even as everyone pays lip service to the need for carbon-free transportation — and even as we enjoy the fruits of past investments on the Charles River Esplanade and elsewhere — we're treating tomorrow's green infrastructure like an optional frill, to be funded by voluntary contributions from rich abutters."

The proposed pedestrian and bike bridge will **provide a much-needed connection between Somerville and Everett, help to complete the 25-mile Mystic Greenways network, connect dozens of North Shore cities with downtown Boston, and close a critical gap in the 3,000-mile East Coast Greenway**. This bridge will also:

- Leverage the state's investment in the Northern Strand: this bridge will connect residents of Lynn, Saugus, Revere, Malden, and Everett to Somerville, Boston and Cambridge. Without this bridge, the Northern Strand will dead-end at the Mystic River.
- Unlock high-capacity transit access to the Orange Line and promote walking and biking, thus reducing automobile trips and vehicular traffic.

- Connect Somerville's recently rebuilt Sylvester Baxter Park, planned Draw 7 Park Redesign and the in-progress path along the MBTA seawall to the new parks and paths along Everett's waterfront.

The Lower Mystic Regional Working Group — required by the casino's MEPA certificate to address traffic impacts — released a report in spring 2019 further emphasizing the need for this bridge:

- "The Lower Mystic area is one of Massachusetts' biggest growth centers. Planned residential and commercial growth could lead to 27,000 new households and 55,000 new jobs in the study area (Everett, Somerville, Charlestown). Collectively, this future growth could meet 5% of the state's housing needs and accommodate 20% of projected statewide employment from 2010-2040, but not without challenges. That much growth could add almost 500,000 new daily trips to and from the study area by 2040 (a 34% increase from 2010), straining the transportation system."
- Two key recommendations of the report: (1) Continue to develop the regional active transportation network with bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths and bridges and; (2) Transit improvements should be complemented by additional road and path improvements

Beyond emphasizing the need for this bridge, we have **four main points to address:**

- (1) **Need for an expanded width, from 12 feet to 14 feet**, to meet safety standards given projected use;
- (2) **Need for the bridge to be complemented by a headhouse retrofit at the Assembly Row T** to connect users to transit;
- (3) **Compensatory mitigation should be applied locally**, not into the in-lieu fee program and;
- (4) **Need for a public meeting as part of the Chapter 91 permitting process.**

### **Expanded Bridge Width**

We are disappointed to see that the bridge width has been reduced from 14 feet to 12 feet – a width that was presented and agreed upon during stakeholder meetings and at the public meeting held in February 2018. A 12-foot width is simply not adequate to safely accommodate those crossing by foot, on bike, in a wheelchair, with a stroller or using new micro-mobility options that are growing rapidly.

We are not asking for a luxury item, but rather a standard. Federal AASHTO and Massachusetts state standards for shared-use paths require a minimum 10-foot path with 2-foot side paths for a 14-foot right-of-way. Bridges are wider as there is no shoulder for users to pass or pause to rest and/or view the river. The Northern Strand Commuter Trail, the primary feeder for this bridge, has a 14-foot clear right-of-way to allow for widening of the trail as demand rises. A trail is easy to change; a bridge is not.

Further, federal standards specify that additional width is required if 85% of users are pedestrians. The projected use levels presented by the proponent are estimated to be 2,390 users/weekday, 85% pedestrian. It's important to note that this doesn't take into account the ever-growing presence of electric bikes and scooters. The path will serve as a long-distance biking corridor as well local pedestrian connection to the Orange Line and employment and entertainment centers of Encore Boston Harbor and Assembly Row.



Given these statistics and the fact that this bridge will be the only safe, off-road active transportation connection from North Shore communities to Boston, **it should reflect the design standards for 21st century pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure with a 14-foot width.** The same 14-foot clear standard applies to the Boston Harborwalk, a relevant waterfront precedent. See the below list of pedestrian/bicycle bridges designed/built in the past five years – all of which are a minimum of 14-feet and have shorter spans than the Mystic Crossing bridge, one of the longest in the state at 785 feet.

*Precedent Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridges*

Complete: Fanny Appleton Bridge [14' width, 607' length]

Complete: Whittier Bridge [15' width, vehicular with shared-use path]

Complete: Cape Cod Rail Trail, Bass River Bridge [14' width]

In-Design: Bruce Freeman Rt. 2 Bridge [14' width, 304' length]

In-Design: Waltham-Wayside Bridge [14' width]

In-Design: Riverside/Charlestown Bridge [16', 150' length]

These standards of safety are not abstract but are necessary as evidenced by the recent collision and resulting fatality on the Minuteman Bikeway caused by passing cyclists. We believe it to be wise to think long-term and invest in minimizing conflict and discomfort of users of all ages, abilities and modes.

**Connection to Assembly Row T**

We urge the state to invest in the retrofit of the Orange Line's Assembly Row T Station to provide direct access from the bridge landing in Somerville. This reduced travel time — a 1- to 2-minute walk instead of an 8- to 10-minute walk to the existing entry — will have a significant impact on use.

**Local Compensatory Mitigation**

We respectfully ask that any required mitigation to offset the impacts of this project be directed locally, not into the in-lieu fee program. We are partnering with DCR on a restoration effort at Draw 7 Park, directly adjacent to the bridge. Mitigation funding could advance the living shoreline, currently in the design phase, providing direct environmental benefit to the area affected by the bridge. This will complement the existing living shoreline across the river at Encore Boston Harbor.

**Chapter 91 Public Process**

We respectfully ask that DEP host a public meeting as part of the Chapter 91 permitting process. We recognize that the bridge is a water-dependent use and therefore a public forum is not required, however the public access component of this project calls for increased transparency and feedback.

**Conclusion**

Lastly, this bridge has the potential to advance equity goals. Three pedestrian bridges, similar in scale to this one, have been built or are in-progress along the Charles River (North Bank, South Bank, Fanny Appleton/Longfellow) in the past seven years. We ask that the same investments be made in the Mystic River, a region with the highest population densities and environmental justice communities in the state.

In closing, we are supportive of this important transportation improvement project but urge the state to carefully evaluate the bridge design to maximize this expensive infrastructure investment that will last for generations to come. Please notify us of future design and permitting milestones. If you have any questions or require additional information please contact MyRWA at (781) 316-3438 or by emailing [patrick@mysticriver.org](mailto:patrick@mysticriver.org).





Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Herron".

Patrick Herron  
Executive Director  
Mystic River Watershed Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber Christoffersen".

Amber Christoffersen  
Greenway Director  
Mystic River Watershed Association

CC:

Leo Roy, DCR  
Dan Driscoll, DCR  
Ruth Helfeld, DCR  
Ginna Johnson, DCR  
Pete Sutton, MassDOT  
Jacqueline DeWolfe, MassDOT  
Representative Christine Barber  
Representative Mike Connolly  
Senator Patricia Jehlen  
Representative Denise Provost  
Brad Rawson, City of Somerville  
Arn Franzen, City of Somerville  
Tony Sousa, City of Everett  
Tom Philbin, City of Everett  
Jay Monty, City of Everett  
John Ziemba, Mass. Gaming Commission  
John Delaney, Mass. Gaming Commission  
Robert DeSalvio, Encore Boston Harbor  
John Tocco, Encore Boston Harbor  
Chris Gordon, Encore Boston Harbor  
Zoya Puri, Encore Boston Harbor



## Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee

Secretary Matthew Beaton  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

May 14, 2019

**Subject:** Mystic River Crossing ENF comments

Dear Secretary Beaton,

I am writing on behalf of the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee (SBAC). SBAC is a mayoral-appointed advisory committee that advises on matters of bicycle safety.

The Mystic River bike and pedestrian bridge will be a gamechanger for unlocking the bicycle and pedestrian network around the Mystic River, and will provide a missing link for a number of current and ongoing projects: On the north side, it will connect to:

- The extended Northern Strand path, connecting all the way up to Lynn
- Paths around the Encore Boston Harbor resort, and to the resort itself
- The rebuilt Malden River bridge
- The planned multiuse path along Beacham St

And on the south side, it will connect to:

- The Mystic River paths, soon to be extended past Draw 7 park and into Charlestown
- The Orange Line station, and the bike path adjacent to the Orange Line
- Planned on-street bike lanes that will provide safe access into Assembly Square, and to Somerville in general

The proposed bridge will be a game changer for linking our communities. Therefore, it is great to see this project advance and continue to be a priority for the Encore developer, and for DCR, and look forward to funding being finalized.

However, the features that make the bridge just an important project also make it important to get the details right. In particular:

- The bridge should be 14ft wide, consistent with DCR's presentation from last year, and with other recent or in-design projects across Massachusetts. With so many important paths being connected, and key destinations being linked, ridership will more than likely be higher than anticipated.
- There should be a direct pedestrian connection between the Orange Line headhouse and the bridge. Improving pedestrian circulation is often the most cost-effective way to increase transit ridership, and could put the T station within walking distance of more of Everett.

**Thank you for your continued efforts to improve multimodal transportation.**

**Tom Lamar  
Chair, Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee**





**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

May 14, 2019

Secretary Kathleen Theoharides  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: Page Czepiga  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Comments on Environmental Notification Form, "Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing"  
(EEA #16015)

Dear Ms. Czepiga,

The Somerville Conservation Commission appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the above referenced project. The Commission is devoted to preserving and protecting the City's natural environment through the administration and enforcement of the Wetland Protection Act and River Protection Acts (MGL Chapter 131 Section 40). In addition, the Commission advises on open space issues pursuant to its authority under the Conservation Commission Act (MGL Chapter 40 Section 8c).

The Commission respectfully submits that the Project as described in the ENF is broadly consistent with the Commission's goals of protecting, improving and celebrating the Mystic River and its adjacent wetlands and public parklands. The Proponent has informed the Commission of its planning and design development activities, most recently at a site visit for Commissioners and the Commission's Conservation Agent in summer 2018. Prior to that, the Proponent attended several regular meetings of the Conservation Commission, and submitted a Notice of Intent in November 2017 to conduct exploratory geotechnical borings and sediment sampling as part of the design development process. The Proponent was issued an Order of Conditions in December 2017 for these activities.

The ENF describes a proposed bridge foundation consisting of drilled shafts to support bridge piers. The ENF notes that preliminary borings have indicated varying subsurface conditions, and that final locations of piers could vary as design progresses. It should be noted that in the Order of Conditions issued by the Somerville Conservation Commission in December 2017, the Proponent is required to receive written approval of the Commission for the location of any future exploratory borings.



The ENF notes that the Somerville landing of the proposed bridge structure would include construction of an abutment in the buffer zone under the Commission's jurisdiction. The Commission looks forward to larger-scale review of any Notice of Intent for construction activities. We are pleased that the ENF references a number of mitigation measures related to work in tidelands jurisdiction, and that key mitigation measures include construction of high-quality landscaped open space along the edge of the River. The Commission has been engaged with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the City of Somerville and the Mystic River Watershed Association to strategize shoreline restoration alternatives in Draw 7 Park including living shoreline treatments. We look forward to advancing these concepts and seeking opportunities to implement them as appropriate.

Regarding operations of a completed facility, the ENF notes that Chapter 91 licensing will be sought from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for post-construction operations and maintenance obligations. The ENF also notes that the Project will comply with DEP stormwater standards. As the Project advances, the Commission looks forward to reviewing operations and maintenance plans proposed for the Project including winter operations plans.

In summary, the Somerville Conservation Commission appreciates the opportunity to review the Proponent's ENF, and looks forward to continued participation in this important Project. We encourage the Proponent to maintain consistent communication and engagement with the Commission during future phases of planning, design development and interagency permitting.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Boukili, Conservation Agent

CC: Rachel Borgatti, Chair  
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone  
John Long, City Clerk



Dear Page,  
Thanks so much for all your  
work on the Mystic River  
Bike/Ped bridge. As you  
know that will be such an  
important link from the  
north shore to Somerville  
and Boston. And also a  
critical link for the East  
Coast Greenway. we also  
hope you will recommend that  
the path be 14 feet wide.  
Thanks for considering. <sup>Dan Reed</sup>  
Susan Reed





May 13, 2019

Kathleen Theoharides  
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: MEPA 16015 Mystic River Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing

Dear Ms. Theoharides:

WalkBoston has worked closely with other community and advocacy groups in support of this proposed bridge over the Mystic River. Because of its critical location at the junction of several lengthy riverside paths, it is of regional significance as a key element in the area's network of pedestrian and bicycle thoroughfares - a system of facilities that WalkBoston has long supported. The critical nature of the connection is magnified by its potential service as a major walkway between a high traffic generating facility (the casino in Everett) and public transportation (the Assembly Station in Somerville). This new walkway will provide a three-minute walk to public transit (as opposed to a twelve-minute existing walk) and encourage a reduced amount of vehicular traffic in the area.

The Casino operators have supported the proposed bridge with investments of \$2,000,000 to date, and have committed to help with further capital funding. We are grateful for this assistance and hope that this provision of private funding will encourage the state to fund a portion of the capital costs, giving the project a higher priority than it now has.

We were surprised that the proposed bridge width has been reduced from 15 feet to 12 feet. Given the impending opening of the casino, the bridge will see a great deal of use by cyclists and walkers who need to share the limited space. Nearly all other pedestrian bridges recently built or under construction by MassDOT exceed this reduced width, adopting a standard that is 14' or wider. We urge you to adopt the more generous standard that reflects the design standards for 21st century bike and pedestrian bridges. When it is constructed, the bridge will be the only safe, off-road non-vehicular connection between North Shore communities and Boston.

Sincerely,

Stacey Beuttell  
Deputy Executive Director

**MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES MORE WALKABLE**

Old City Hall | 45 School Street | Boston MA 02108 | T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | [info@walkboston.org](mailto:info@walkboston.org) | [www.walkboston.org](http://www.walkboston.org)



Are you on board?

15 State Street, Suite 1100  
Boston, MA 02109  
617.223.8671  
[bostonharbornow.org](http://bostonharbornow.org)

May 14, 2019

Via email: [page.czepiga@state.ma.us](mailto:page.czepiga@state.ma.us)

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
Attention: Page Czepiga  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, Environmental Notification Form

Dear Ms. Czepiga,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing submitted by Massachusetts Property (proponent). Earlier this year, Boston Harbor Now submitted comments for the ENF filing and the Chapter 91 license for the Draw Seven Pathway Extension Project. At the time, we strongly supported the creation of a multi-use pedestrian/bike pathway, and today, we remain encouraged by the Draw Seven Pathway Extension project and the proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing.

We applaud the proponent for moving this important project forward. We strongly support their efforts and the creation of the Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing in coordination the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Draw Seven Pathway Extension Project currently underway.

Together, these connections will significantly improve the pedestrian and bike-friendly routes of the region as well as provide a critical link between Everett, Somerville, the MTBA Assembly Station, and abutting neighborhoods.

#### **Project Description**

As presented in the ENF, the proposed bridge will be 12 feet wide, 785 feet long and approximately 56 feet high at the top of the arch. The bridge will cross the Lower Mystic River with the Everett side connection at the Encore Boston Harbor Resort harborwalk and the Somerville side connection at the Draw Seven Park. The proposed design includes lighting, seating, and signage along the entire length of the bridge. Clear markings will signal travel directions and encourage pedestrians and bicyclists to share the travel lanes.

Portions of the site are owned by the Commonwealth and managed by DCR. Per an existing terms and conditions construction and access permit, DCR will own the bridge structure once it is completed.

The project area has been identified in DCR's 2009 Mystic River Master Plan as part of a pedestrian and bicycle network that will address a range of environmental, open space, and land use issues in and around the Mystic River.

### **Bridge Design & Public Access**

It has come to Boston Harbor Now's attention that the width of the bridge has been reduced from 14 feet to 12 feet. While the proposal mentions the new 12-foot width, the renderings included in the project filing -- specifically figure 3-6 -- do not clearly show the size and scale of the proposed width. We respectfully request that future renderings clearly identify the proposed width and incorporate renderings of proposed amenities like benches, lighting, and wayfinding signage.

In March, the [Boston Globe](#) covered an unfortunate fatal cyclist collision on the Minuteman Bikeway from Cambridge to Bedford. After colliding on the 12-foot wide path, one cyclist sustained serious injuries and the other was fatally wounded.

The Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing will be a critical and long-term pedestrian and bike connection, particular care should be given to the design of the pathway that promote both function and safety for both bicyclist and pedestrians. If the bridge is intended to be both a pedestrian and bike crossing, it should be wide enough to accommodate both uses in each direction and designed to minimize pedestrians-cyclist conflicts. Expanding the crossing to 14 feet would allow 7 feet to be shared by pedestrian, strollers, wheelchairs, bicycles, and others in either direction.

Finally, as the project moves forward through the permitting process and due to the significance of this connection for members of the public, we respectfully request that a public hearing be held as part of the Chapter 91 Waterways License Application process.

We look forward to the construction of the bicycle and pedestrian crossing. This project will serve to enhance the regional network of waterfront bike/pedestrian pathways that ensure our waterfront is more publicly accessible, more frequently visited, and welcoming to everyone. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Jill Valdes Horwood  
Director of Policy