



Are you on board?

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Via email to: alex.strysky@state.ma.us

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Ste 900 (9th Floor)
Boston, MA 02114

Attention: Alex Strysky, MEPA Office

Re: 135 Morrissey Environmental Notification Form, EEA#15810

Dear Mr. Strysky,

Boston Harbor Now is pleased to submit comments for the 135 Morrissey Environmental Notification Form submitted. We support the proposed building renovation and public access enhancements, and we look forward to the completion of this project.

Project Description

As proposed, the 135 Morrissey project is a comprehensive shell renovation project of the existing building and surrounding landscape. The entire site is approximately 16.6 acres, 125,171 SF of which sits on filled tidelands and includes part of the existing building, parking areas, and landscaping. The proposed project will be built-out in a single phase, include 695,000 SF of mixed-use space across three floors, a mezzanine level, 868 parking spaces, 209 covered bicycle storage spaces, and publicly accessible bike racks.

The renovation is intended to attract office, technology, light manufacturing, warehouse, and life science tenants. As currently proposed, building program includes a 100-seat restaurant, a 10,000 SF fitness facility, and 8,000 SF of retail space. The atrium core will be open for public use during working hours.

In 2004, approximately 26,673 SF was added to the space above the loading docks. Although this addition sits on filled tidelands, it does not have a valid Chapter 91 license or amendment. As part of the current permitting process, the Proponent will submit a Chapter 91 License application seeking approval for the 2004 addition. We look forward to reviewing the complete Chapter 91 filing for the project.

Open Space & Public Access

Part of the project site borders the Patten's Cove park, a 9.6-acre park along a tidal creek. It is maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and includes lawns, shaded areas, and pathways that connect directly to the Savin Hill neighborhood at Davitt Street. This project will create a new green buffer and multi-use pathway to enhance the pedestrian and bike connections

between Patten's Cove Park, the project site, and the Savin Hill neighborhood. We applaud efforts to improve walkability to and across the site that provides better connectivity for the neighborhood and links residents and visitors with existing green spaces.

It is our understanding that the DCR and the project proponent have discussed a possible partnership for the maintenance and oversight of the park. In the spirit of Chapter 91 and to ensure public access is not only improved but also maintained, we strongly support a partnership arrangement of this kind.

We are excited to hear that the north side of the building will serve as both an outdoor amenity and a future connection to the MBTA JFK/UMass Red Line/South Shore Commuter Rail Station. We applaud the many efforts to incorporate accessibility improvements that support the use of sustainable transportation modes to and from the site, especially the orientation towards leveraging the site's proximity to a major transit station.

Climate Preparedness

The project site is located within the FEMA 100-year floodplain and at high risk for future flooding. In the near term, this site and nearby areas like the JFK/UMass Station will be exposed to major coastal flooding events. As soon as 2050, all of Morrissey Blvd and sections of the I-93 will be at risk in major flooding events.

In addition to increasing the pervious areas, the project will raise the site to 20.5 ft BCB. Critical systems, electric, cable, and other utility services located below design flood elevation will be dry flood proofed or relocated above the base flood elevation. The proponent is considering temporary flood barriers at building openings and around below-grade spaces. As we experienced during the recent coastal flooding events, system like the Aquafence deployed along Congress Street were crucial and effective in keeping floodwaters out and protecting the building's interior spaces. Due to the major coastal flooding anticipated for this area, we strongly recommend a combination of climate preparedness strategies that include, at minimum, raising the site elevation and temporary flood barriers.

Beyond ramping up flood protection for the project site, we encourage the proponent to work with agencies like Boston Parks and Recreation, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and UMass Boston all of whom are contributing to Dorchester's climate preparedness and increase neighborhood-wide resiliency beyond the parcel-by-parcel approach.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Jill Valdés-Horwood
Director of Policy