



Are you on board?

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Sept 2, 2022

Via email: stephen.j.harvey@boston.gov

Boston Planning and Development Agency
Attn: Stephen Harvey
1 City Hall Plaza, Floor 9
Boston MA. 02201

Re: 800 Morrissey Boulevard PNF

Joseph Aiello
Grace Macomber Bird
Jamie M. Fay
Robert Golledge
Elizabeth Grob
Meaghan Hooper-Berdik
Bryan J. Koop
Ann Lagasse
Malia Lazu
Mary Kay Leonard
Shelagh Mahoney
Martin O'Neill
Elaine Richardson
Demetrious Russell
Cathy Douglas Stone
Kishore Varanasi
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Dear Mr. Harvey,

Boston Harbor Now respectfully submits the following comments on the *800 Morrissey Boulevard Project Notification Form* submitted by the Michaels Organization and the Phillips Group. Boston Harbor Now has been following this project and has previously submitted comments in December 2021. We recently attended the August 17th Public Meeting and the August 24th Impact Advisory Group Meeting. We have also been carefully following the Neponset River Greenway extension project adjacent to the site.

As longtime stewards of the Boston Harborwalk, Boston Harbor Now is committed to ensuring that the waterfront we build today is designed for a more resilient and inclusive future. We use the term “Harborwalk 2.0” to capture the aspirations of this work to ensure that the design of the waterfront is accessible and welcoming, is prepared for the coastal impacts of climate change, and centers equity and inclusion in its design and programming. For this project, we are particularly focused on ensuring that we can make the waterfront more accessible through high quality linear and lateral connections between the city and the water that feel welcoming to all Bostonians. We also want to ensure that projects subject to coastal flooding and other climate risks have adequate adaptation measures.

Activating the Neponset River Greenway Extension

This project will help support the Harborwalk 2.0 vision of creating a more accessible waterfront by creating a critical neighborhood connection to the new Neponset River Greenway extension, a 4,650-linear foot pathway for pedestrians and cyclists. The existing Neponset River Greenway reaches beyond Dorchester into Milton, Hyde Park, and Mattapan. The extension will not only extend the existing multi-use path north along Dorchester Bay to disconnected parks and beaches, but it will also provide an essential Harborwalk connection in this area. Although they are inland of the expressway, the combination Greenway extension and 800 Morrissey path connection will play a vital role in providing cyclists and pedestrians safe access to waterfront amenities both north and south of this site. We appreciate that the project proponent understands the significance of the greenway extension and has chosen to activate the adjoining space with art and a public park in addition to creating the path that will allow community members to access the extension easily. By supporting and



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activating the abutting extension, this project will in turn help advance the mission of Harborwalk 2.0 and make the waterfront more accessible for an area of Dorchester that has long been cut off from the shoreline.

This project, and all private developments that abut the new extension will have some responsibility for the maintenance and activation of this pathway, a task that the proponent seems prepared to handle. We commend the proponents' commitment to activating the extension with a mural and improved landscaping as well as their decision to create greater building setbacks along the path. This design change will make the paths feel less channelized and privatized.

We also are pleased to see the creation of the public pocket park off the extension. Creating a spot for travelers to take a rest will be a useful asset for commuters. In addition to the proposed seating, other amenities may be useful, including a water fountain and a bike repair station. Clear signage for both the park and the connecting path, in order to invite the public to use both spaces, is also recommended.

Climate Resilience

While the site is not along the shoreline, it is included in the Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District since it will be vulnerable to the projected 1% chance annual flood anticipated with sea level rise by 2070. At present, the development has proposed a number of measures to address projected climate change impacts, including raising the living spaces to the 2070 sea level rise design flood elevation (SLR DFE) 21.5' BCB. While these measures are beneficial to protecting vulnerable parts of the site, we hope for a more detailed and comprehensive resilience plan to ensure that critical infrastructure, including utilities, are installed at a flood-safe elevation. At future phases of the permitting process, the proponent is encouraged to include a diagram detailing the elevations throughout the site. Additionally, the proponent should clarify how building spaces below the SLR DFE, like the parking and bicycle storage room, will be protected by deployable barriers or other flood protection measures or if it will be used for flood water storage.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to following 800 Morrissey's progress. Boston Harbor Now will continue to track this project through future phases of design and construction. Our staff would be happy to speak further with the proponent or the BPDA if there are additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Abbott".

Kathy Abbott
President and CEO
Boston Harbor Now