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July 21, 2022

Via email: BOST_Rangers@nps.gov

CNY Master Development Plan Project
Boston National Historical Park
Attn: Superintendent Michael Creasey
21 Second Ave
Charlestown, MA 02129

Re: Environmental Assessment for the Charlestown Navy Yard

Dear Superintendent Creasey,

Boston Harbor Now respectfully submits the following comments on the environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed actions under the Master Development Strategy for the Charlestown Navy Yard. Our organization has been following this project, attended the virtual meeting on June 2, 2021, and has reviewed the materials available online including the June 21, 2022 summary.

We appreciate the work of the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Navy, and the USS Constitution Museum to improve this critical historic section of the Boston waterfront and hope that these new park improvements will allow these organizations to continue and expand the great work they've engaged in to preserve and interpret the past while welcoming people to Boston Harbor. We are, in particular, excited by the way that these new and modified sites will further activate the waterfront in ways that complement the existing water sheet uses. The new visitor center at the Hoosac building site and the open frame structure at Building 109 will draw people to the water and allow for longer visits to the Navy Yard. We hope that NPS also continues to create programming that attracts new audiences to the waterfront. We are particularly enthusiastic about the potential for a new segment of Harborwalk that will connect Constitution Wharf directly to Pier 1 and the creation of a clear and continuous waterfront path elsewhere in the Navy Yard.

Activating The Navy Yard and Waterfront

The newly proposed visitor center at the Hoosac Stores Building location is a welcome addition to the Charlestown Navy Yard. We support the vision for a new building that will consolidate the USS Constitution Museum and the present visitor center and hope that this new space will be a welcoming gateway and destination for the entire Charlestown Navy Yard. Recent programming in the Charlestown Navy



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Yard has done a wonderful job of inviting the community to engage with both the present day and historic waterfront. We hope that this new center will allow NPS and its partners to continue this great work and attract new visitors.

We also support the demolition and rebuilding of Building 109 as an additional site for activation along the waterfront. In its current state Building 109 is structurally unsound and contains hazardous materials making it unsafe for visitors to engage with it meaningfully. We agree that a better use of this site would be an open air structure that could provide a much needed source of shade in this part of the Navy Yard, particularly due to the projected increase of extremely hot days and the lack of trees on the wharves and piers. By using the new space for additional programming and special events, the harbor will be included more directly in the visitor experience.

NPS has worked to increase the range of cultural and programmatic offerings and developed these new programs with community input. Notably, they have brought in temporary art installations and a diverse offering of live music performances to attract new local and visiting audiences. We appreciate NPS's creativity and their dedication to engaging with new groups. We hope that these new facilities will allow them to expand these offerings.

Connecting the Harborwalk

With the work being done at the present locations of the Hoosac Building and Building 109 comes the chance to create a new Harborwalk. As advocates for Harborwalk 2.0, which calls for a Harborwalk that is accessible, resilient, and equitable, we are delighted to see that the new park improvements will lead to improved Harborwalk connectivity. At present, the Harborwalk along Constitution Wharf results in a dead end and users must leave the water's edge to walk along Constitution Road and connect to the Harborwalk in the National Park.

Connecting the Constitution Wharf and Pier 1 via a waterfront pedestrian route that can be used at all times would enable a continuous Harborwalk to improve public access to the Harbor more aligned with the spaces created elsewhere by Chapter 91, thereby improving flow and providing more views of the historic ship docked between the two piers. Beyond the USS Constitution, we hope to see a more clearly defined path along the edge of Pier 1 that enables visitors to view the Constitution and walk along the water to the new shade structure at



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Building 109 before continuing on to the USS Cassin Young and Dry Dock 1. Creating this last connection will finally allow Harborwalk users to seamlessly visit some of the most iconic exhibits in the park whilst remaining connected to the water, which is a central theme of this park.

Just as we appreciate our partnership with NPS to make the Boston Harbor Islands exceptional, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important waterfront project and will continue to remain engaged in the future development of this area through all facets of this planning including coastal adaptation to climate change impacts. We would be happy to speak with you further if there are additional questions.

Sincerely,

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

Kathy Abbott
President and CEO
Boston Harbor Now