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July 31, 2024 Via email: SMB-D1BostonBridgesPublicNotices@uscg.mil

US Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard
Attn: Donna A. Fischer
408 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, MA 02110

Re: Replacement of Long Island Bridge, Public Notice 1-204-24

Dear Ms. Fischer,

Boston Harbor Now respectfully submits the following comments in response to the City of Boston's proposal to replace the Long Island Bridge between Quincy, MA and Long Island, in Boston Harbor. Our staff has been following this project, and last submitted a comment letter on the 2018 MEPA Notice of Project Change. As longtime stewards of the Boston Harborwalk and the non-profit partner of the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, Boston Harbor Now is committed to ensuring that the waterfront we build today is designed for a more resilient and inclusive future and facilitating and increasing public access to Boston Harbor and the Islands.

Coastal Resilience

It is our understanding that the replacement bridge will be elevated .75 feet (8 inches) above the original height and built on the existing piers. Within the constraint of using the existing piers we want the bridge to be prepared for climate impacts. With sea levels expected to rise in Boston Harbor approximately 40 inches by 2070, we want to ensure that the bridge clearance is sufficient for boats now and in the future. Additionally, the bridge should be climate-resilient for its expected useful life, which may extend past our current climate models of 2070. It should, at minimum, be able to withstand the anticipated 40 inches of sea level rise and perhaps more depending on the expected life of the bridge. Additionally, unlike the rest of the Boston coastline, which is protected by the Boston Harbor Islands, this bridge will likely be subjected to intense wave action. Given that the bridge will be the only physical connection between Long Island and mainland Boston/Quincy, it is imperative that the bridge remains safe and accessible, especially in the face of climate change.

Access to Long Island

A key component of Boston Harbor Now's mission is to facilitate and increase public access to Boston Harbor and the Islands. Research on public health and open space has found that green environments are directly linked to our communities' increased physical and mental health. As cities continue to develop and grow, the preservation of open space as a matter of public health becomes increasingly clear—especially



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in dense urban environments like Boston. Long Island is the largest island in the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area. The Islands and Harbor together represent 34,000 acres of public blue and green open space in the Greater Boston Region serves as a major public health resource for over 3.5 million residents and millions of visitors. It is exciting to contemplate Long Island, the Park, and the Harbor's impact on our region's public and economic health.

Access to this remarkable public space will largely depend on this bridge. Even if water transportation service is eventually provided, the bridge will be crucial for regional access to the island. Future seasonal ferry access for recreation purposes would be an exciting prospect that we'd support, but useful year-round ferry service would necessitate roll-on roll-off vehicle ferries which are not feasible. Given the importance of the bridge, if the existing piers can withstand it, we would like to see bicycle lanes incorporated into the bridge design to help create a more welcoming experience for potential visitors to the island. We also hope the bridge grading will be ADA-compliant, allowing people of all abilities to take advantage of the bridge and island.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project and look forward to following its progress toward implementation. We would be happy to speak with you further if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

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

Kathy Abbott
President and CEO
Boston Harbor Now