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March 6, 2026

Massport Strategic Business and Planning Department  
One Harborside Drive  
East Boston, MA 02128  
*Via electronic mail: [community@massport.com](mailto:community@massport.com)*

**RE: 2025 Draft Massport Strategic Plan**

Dear Members of Massport's Strategic Business and Planning Department:

Boston Harbor Now appreciates the opportunity to comment on Massport's 2025 Draft Strategic Plan.

Boston Harbor Now's mission is to ensure that Boston Harbor, its waterfront and islands are accessible and inclusive and that these special places are properly adapted to the risks of climate change. We advocate for climate resiliency measures that contribute to district-scale flood protection and improve ecosystem services, as well as waterfront activation that welcomes everyone, especially those who have been historically excluded. We do this through a variety of initiatives - including the Stone Living Lab - with the goal of realizing our Harborwalk 2.0 vision of a vibrant, welcoming, and resilient coastline along Boston's 47-mile waterfront. We also strongly support active maritime uses on the Harbor, including on Massport's properties.

We commend Massport for making measurable progress since the last Strategic Plan was promulgated in 2014. Improvements and growth at the Conley Terminal, Flynn Cruiseport, and Airport in particular have been tremendous boons for existing and emerging industries, the regional economy, and job creation; and we're impressed with the opening of Piers Park II, ventures at the Fish Pier, and an increase in community-centered programming on Massport properties.

Overall, Boston Harbor Now supports Massport's new Strategic Plan. These brief comments on the plan are focused on climate resilience on Massport properties, and activating Massport's maritime and real estate assets surrounding Boston Harbor.

**Coastal Climate Resilience**

We appreciate that Massport has a comprehensive plan to protect its coastal properties from climate impacts as well as your focus on district-scale solutions that aim to protect surrounding neighborhoods from sea level rise, tidal flooding, increased precipitation, and storm surge. We urge you to ensure that

flood pathways are also protected - especially those that impact inland Environmental Justice communities.

We also hope you will expand communications and outreach with neighboring communities impacted by coastal flooding throughout design and construction of climate resilient infrastructure. An excellent example of proactive community engagement is happening surrounding Massport's creation of a new, resilient Harborwalk loop at Reserved Channel.

We are grateful that Massport is already engaged in active conversations with the Stone Living Lab around implementing strategies like living seawalls and other nature-based resilience adaptations on Massport properties. As Massport looks to protect its assets and the neighborhoods along Boston Harbor, we recommend that nature-based approaches and hybrid solutions are prioritized wherever feasible.

### **Massport Property Activation**

We appreciate Massport's placemaking work to activate its properties around Boston Harbor, and commend your work to diversify program audiences to include those who have been historically underserved by the benefits of the waterfront's green and blue public spaces. We know that it takes considerable amounts of time and investments to build community trust towards creating truly vibrant and welcoming waterfront spaces, especially in areas where people have historically been cut off from Boston Harbor.

To reach these goals, we urge Massport to lean on existing community networks to activate properties, and increase funding commitments to both the REAM team and to provide grants to external community partners. In particular, we hope Massport will further engage and support nonprofit partners to expand accessible and inclusive programming, especially in South Boston and East Boston, and on undeveloped parcels. As we have discussed with Massport's staff, Boston Harbor Now has relationships with over 400 community groups and would be happy to help bring more diverse audiences and underserved communities to Massport properties, creating a sense of belonging.

We also suggest you strategically employ the results of Boston Harbor Now's recent [Waterfront Visitation and Equity Study](#), when working to create a sense of belonging for underrepresented communities along the waterfront. The study identifies who the 11 million visitors are to Boston's waterfront each year, as well as who is not sharing in equitable access. The study provides tools, insights, and practices that can help Massport to direct efforts and investments so these waterfront spaces are places of joy, health, resilience, and connection for all.

Finally, we hope Massport will make a concerted effort to identify opportunities to create and improve waterfront access within Designated Port Areas, where there may be portions of properties that can include public access while still maintaining adjacent industrial uses. Boston Harbor Now would appreciate the opportunity to meet to discuss creative ways to increase public access to waterfront spaces in a way that prioritizes safe and efficient operations of maritime industries.

We look forward to partnering with Massport to help implement your strategic goals, especially as related to a coastal resilient waterfront and activating your properties in support of diverse audiences.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy Abbott".

Kathy Abbott  
President & CEO

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