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July 24, 2026

Via email: alexander.stryisky@mass.gov

Alexander Stryisky
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office
100 Cambridge St, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Reserved Channel Masterplan Draft Environmental Impact Report (EEA #16802)

Dear Mr. Stryisky,

Boston Harbor Now respectfully submits the following comments on the Reserved Channel Masterplan Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

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.

After reviewing the DEIR filing by Oxford Properties Group and Pappas Enterprises, Inc. (collectively, the "Proponent"), we are pleased to see a number of meaningful commitments that will enhance this property into a vibrant public destination for the people of South Boston and the City of Boston. In particular, we appreciate:

- The project's vision of transforming this industrial waterfront into a resilient, publicly accessible district centered on new open space, improved waterfront access, and multimodal connections.
- The commitment to 11.5 acres of publicly accessible open space on the waterfront, including a continuous network that will enhance the Harborwalk and reconnect South Boston residents with the Reserved Channel.
- The prioritization of residential units based on community feedback to the Environmental Notification Form.
- A phased approach to development that prioritizes delivery of Harborwalk improvements, waterfront recreation, and publicly accessible open spaces as early as possible.

Boston Harbor Now | PO Box 961712 | Boston, MA 02196

Public Realm Benefits, Design, and Activation

In the 12.86 acre Phase 1 site, we encourage the Proponent to emphasize interim waterfront improvements, shared-use paths, flexible recreational spaces, programmable lawns, and early activation of the waterfront while preserving flexibility for future resilience investments. Implementing these amenities in the earliest phases will provide meaningful public benefits long before full project buildout is complete. While we understand that the Pappas Way open space improvements will be implemented over phases over the next decades, we encourage the Proponent to center the community's desire for the eventual closure of Pappas Way to incorporate the roadway into a larger waterfront open space. This could operate similar to the Charles River Esplanade, allowing emergency access when necessary by creating a mixed use pathway wide enough to accommodate vehicles. In addition, we recommend that funding is dedicated to operate, maintain, and program the park space. We also call for the proponent to actively engage and collaborate with community leaders, public schools, neighborhood associations, and nonprofit partners to ensure all visitors and neighbors experience equitable access to the park and waterfront and a sense of belonging at the site.

We urge the proponent to refer to the [Boston Waterfront Partners' Equity Rubric](#) to ensure the project meets benchmarks towards a "more inclusive waterfront, one in which people from BIPOC, lower-income, non-English speaking, LGBTQ, disabled, and other marginalized groups feel a sense of belonging" on our waterfront (BWP Equity Rubric for Waterfront Development, 2025). When designing the 3.04 acre waterfront open space, we encourage the Proponent to also refer to Boston Harbor Now's [Visualizing Harborwalk 2.0](#) design guidelines, which detail best practices for creating accessible, welcoming, and resilient waterfront spaces and multi-use pathways. Examples of centering equity in waterfront design and development include strategies that make this regional destination feel safe and inclusive through lighting, shade, multilingual signage, full ADA accommodations, affordability, community relevancy, and the elimination of features that could cause users to feel unwelcome or excluded.

Public amenities include Facilities of Public Accommodation (FPAs) required under the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act (M.G.L. Ch. 91) and regulations, which should remain open to the general public, and be accessible at the street level. FPA spaces onsite should include gender-inclusive public restrooms with baby-changing stations, drinking fountains, free Wi-Fi, and furnishings. FPAs should include civic and cultural gathering spaces and meeting rooms available for public use. Gathering spaces should have a user-friendly, multilingual, online booking system so that they are truly accessible to groups that plan to use them. We hope to see these elements incorporated into this project and enumerated in future planning documents and phases of review.

Transportation Connections

We know from regular participation in community engagement and separate meetings around the adjacent project for the Harborwalk Basin Loop that transportation to and through the site is a key priority for the neighborhood. This project has the potential to create safer, more active transportation connections between the South Boston residential neighborhoods and the Seaport district, and we support the Proponent's plan to extend F Street as the primary thoroughfare through the site, with Pappas Way serving as the main bike and pedestrian oriented pathway along the Reserved Channel waterfront. We ask the Proponent to detail how they will work with the MBTA around the future integration of bus service planned along new roadways, particularly on F Street and Road 1. We appreciate the inclusion of bike and pedestrian infrastructure throughout the site, and support the future plan to disconnect Pappas Way from East First Street/West First Street to create a new open space.

Future filings should detail how walkways throughout the site will be safe for multi-purpose transportation modes, with lighting, intentional layouts, and signage regarding speed and pedestrian right of way. Given the proliferation of electric bike/scooter/skateboard traffic throughout urban environments, the proponent should consider separated bike and scooter lanes as well as speed and use limits in high activity areas.

We appreciate the participation of the Proponent in the previously mentioned, ongoing planning process to create design concepts for completing the Harborwalk Basin Loop around the entire Reserved Channel, which will tie into this Masterplan site at the boundary of the project site which borders the Southwest portion of the Reserved Channel. We encourage the Proponent to continue coordinating with the Basin Loop project team, which includes South Boston elected officials, Massport and City of Boston staff, ARUP, and Boston Harbor Now, to ensure that proposed Harborwalk improvements and elevations will tie into design concepts for that connection. We also urge the Proponent to work with Eversource, who recently acquired the abutting parcels to this project site and will be a key stakeholder in completing a continuous Harborwalk loop around the Channel. We ask the Proponent to clarify whether the proposed improvements to the project site at the Southwest corner of the Reserved Channel are limited to landscaping, or if the Harborwalk is intended to continue along this edge and tie into a future Basin Loop connector.

Site Resilience

We support the Proponent's plan to elevate all new building and streets to City of Boston 2070 flood projections, with "sloped areas, landscaped terraces, steps, ramps, and other landscaped transitions that are integrated into the open space design to maintain accessibility, provide amenities (i.e., planting, seating, etc.) and enhance

connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods” (Reserved Channel Masterplan DEIR, 2026). We also appreciate that stormwater improvements to the site will discharge into BWSC separate sewers, as to not increase combined sewer overflow discharges into the Reserved Channel.

We encourage continued coordination of the project's resilience strategy with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' ongoing Boston Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRMS) Study, which will release draft alignments for this area in July 2026. Designing shoreline improvements, Harborwalk infrastructure, and public open spaces to integrate with future regional coastal protection investments will maximize long-term public access, recreation, and climate resilience while avoiding the need for costly future modifications. The DEIR appropriately identifies the importance of connecting to future regional climate resilience efforts, and we encourage the Proponent to continue advancing this coordination through subsequent phases of review.

Boston Harbor Now is grateful for the opportunity to comment on this project and looks forward to participating in the upcoming MEPA and Chapter 91 processes to discuss ways to furnish, activate, and create a more welcoming public realm. We would be happy to meet to discuss our recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy Abbott", written in a cursive style.

Kathy Abbott
President & CEO