



August 30, 2016

Mr. Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900 (9th Floor)
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
Attn: MEPA Office

Subject: MEPA Environmental Notification Form
Mystic Landing, 61 Locust Street, Medford, MA

Dear Secretary Beaton,

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is pleased to submit comments on the Environmental Notification Form for the Mystic Landing project, 61 Locust Street, Medford, MA. We believe that this project could be a model sustainable development with functional and beautiful green infrastructure that benefits residents and the surrounding environment. By reusing existing infrastructure and a redeveloping an existing site bringing it up to current environmental standards, especially with respect to stormwater management, the project can improve the existing environmental conditions.

MyRWA was founded in 1972 “to protect and restore the Mystic River, its tributaries and watershed lands for the benefit of present and future generations and to celebrate the value, importance and great beauty of these natural resources. We recently launched the Mystic Greenways Initiative, a multi-year, multi-stakeholder effort to renew and stimulate more active use in waterfront lands. There are several opportunities for 61 Locust Street to advance and benefit from this initiative, as outlined in the comments below.

Connectivity

The site is well located for providing access to the waterfront path network that extends along the Mystic River: north to the Alewife Greenway, Mystic Lakes and Minuteman Bike Path and south into Boston and the Charles River. MyRWA is currently working with local organizations to implement the missing 0.5 mile-link joining ten miles of continuous greenways (see map). This project – referred to as the Clippership Connector – will connect Medford Square to the Wellington T station, benefitting commuters and recreational users alike. **We ask that the developer of the 61 Locust Street development – located just a block away from a key access point – contribute to implementation of this project, assist with long-term stewardship and provide adequate linkages to these Mystic River greenways.**

We are pleased that the developer will provide safe and accessible crossings to shopping across the street by adding a pedestrian-activated signal or a high-intensity activated crosswalk (“HAWK”). Locust Street also has adequate right-of-way to expand biking and pedestrian facilities with additional street trees, thus increasing active transportation as well as contributing to a neighborhood-feel rather than one dominated by cars. These amenities will benefit the residents and the neighborhood.

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Green Infrastructure

We are encouraged by new development in the area and are supportive of the developer's goal to reduce the impervious area of the site by 14,000 square feet and increase pervious areas and landscaping by 35%. Additionally, we are pleased to see that the proposal includes a variance to reduce parking to 1.5 space per residential unit.

However, the latest design showed that the proportion of impervious surface on the site is only reduced from 87% to 82%. **We urge the developer to not only add bioretention/rain gardens that are functional and aesthetically pleasing but also to treat the new streets that provide access to the parking lots as "green streets", using porous pavement, infiltration basins and linear rain gardens to catch and treat stormwater.** Green roofs would also contribute to the stated landscaping goal. Lastly, with the 300 secured bike parking spaces and potential addition of a shuttle to the Orange Line and onsite car-share, we believe that the 781 parking spaces could be further reduced. Reducing impervious surfaces will not only improve the environmental and aesthetic value of the site but will improve resiliency to climate change impacts such as storm surges. We urge the developer to account for these future conditions.

In closing, we are encouraged to see a development that will remediate the existing site and bring more people to the Mystic River and surrounding neighborhoods. We hope to continue to partner with the city and developer to make these waterfront parklands a local and regional amenity. If you have any questions or require additional information please contact MyRWA at (781) 316-3438 or by emailing amber.christoffersen@mysticriver.org .

Sincerely,



Patrick Herron
Executive Director
Mystic River Watershed Association



Amber Christoffersen
Mystic Greenways Director
Mystic River Watershed Association

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