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February 14, 2025

PUBLIC BENEFIT DETERMINATION
OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

PROJECT NAME : Route 1A Southbound Ramps & Roundabout Project (related to Gibson Park Resiliency Project)
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Revere
PROJECT WATERSHED : North Coastal
EEA NUMBER : 16834 (Route 1A) and 16711 (Gibson Park) (related projects)
PROJECT PROPONENT : City of Revere
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : December 11, 2024

Consistent with the provisions of *An Act Relative to Licensing Requirements for Certain Tidelands*, I hereby determine that the above-referenced project will have a public benefit. I issued a Certificate on the Single Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on January 17, 2025, which indicated that the Single EIR adequately and properly complied with MEPA and its implementing regulations (301 CMR 11.00) and that the project could proceed to permitting.

Project Description

As described in the Single EIR, the project, which will be implemented in two phases, consists of the construction of a new roundabout; reconstruction of an existing intersection connecting Route 1A southbound (also known as North Shore Road), a roadway controlled by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), to the Lynnway, a roadway controlled by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); and construction of a new access drive connecting the nearby Gibson Park to the proposed roundabout.

Phase I is proposed to include the reconstruction of the existing southbound on- and off-ramps connecting Route 1A to the Lynnway and the construction of a new single lane roundabout. The roundabout will consist of three legs, including the Route 1A southbound off-ramp; a new access drive (Gibson Way) providing direct access to/from the private development immediately north of the project site on the west side of Route 1A (22 Whitin Avenue); and a roadway connector (Gibson Park Drive) leading to the Route 1A southbound on-ramp and a reconstructed intersection with the Lynnway. Work on Route 1A is limited to modifications to the southbound outside shoulder and sidewalk to accommodate the relocated on- and off-ramps. Upon entering the 22 Whitin Avenue property, Gibson Way will bifurcate with general access for all vehicles continuing to the front of the development and restricted access being directed towards the back of the building where the loading & receiving docks, trash, and utilities will be located. Phase I will also include improvements in bicycle and pedestrian facilities through the construction of a ten foot (ft) shared use path along Gibson Park Drive and traffic calming roadway geometry. In addition, Phase I has been designed specifically to accommodate the additional connection to Gibson Park.

Phase II of the project will involve the construction of a new access driveway which will connect Gibson Park to the roundabout via Gibson Way (maintaining the original three legs of the roundabout proposed in Phase I). The access driveway would directly connect the redesigned and reconstructed parking lot at Gibson Park to Gibson Way by passing over a portion of the adjacent private property (22 Whitin Avenue), through an acquired easement from the private property owner. Specifically, the new access driveway would connect to the restricted access drive (which connects the back of the 22 Whitin Avenue development to Gibson Way) which would become open to general public travel upon completion of Phase II. The remaining section of the restricted access drive extending from the new connection with Gibson Park to the rear of the 22 Whitin Avenue development would remain restricted access only.

According to the Single EIR, the primary goals of the project are to improve and promote local connectivity within the Point of Pines neighborhood; enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and access to Gibson Park; and provide the opportunity for increased economic development along the riverfront by connecting isolated parcels west of Route 1A to the Lynnway. As noted above, the Single EIR clarified the connections to the 22 Whitin Avenue development and now indicates that the project serves to improve the primary access to that site.

Project Site

The project site occupies approximately 4.76 acres (Phase I occupying 4.28 acres and Phase II occupying 0.48 acres)¹ and generally consists of the existing Route 1A highway interchange area in the Point of Pines neighborhood within the City of Revere. Specifically, the project site includes southbound side of Route 1A, south of the General Edwards Bridge and north of the intersection with John Avenue; the southbound on- and off-ramps, located on the west side of Route 1A; the intersection of Gibson Park Drive and the Lynnway; the eastern border of Gibson Park, and the southern border of the adjacent private development located at 22 Whitin Avenue. Route 1A is an urban principal arterial state highway that runs discontinuously from north to south and provides a connection through Massachusetts from the New Hampshire border to the Rhode Island border. In proximity to the project site, Route 1A is a partially limited access, median divided highway that runs through Revere before exiting over the

¹ This represents a 0.29-acre increase in the size of the project area resulting from minor adjustments to the project's design.

General Edwards Bridge into Lynn. Route 1A bisects the Point of Pines peninsula, acting as a barrier between the east side, made up of mostly local residential streets, and the west side, made up of additional residential streets and open space, including Gibson Park.

State and local wetland resource areas located within and adjacent to the project site include Barrier Beach, Coastal Dune, and Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF). According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) (Panel No. 25025C0029J and 25025C0028J, effective March 16, 2026), a portion of the project site is located within a Zone AE (including a portion of a Coastal Zone A) with a Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of elevation 10 ft NAVD88. A portion of the project site is also located within filled tidelands, and the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). In addition, the project site is located within the Point of Pines Historic Area (REV.P), which is listed in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth.

The project site is located within an Environmental Justice ("EJ") Population characterized by Minority and Income and within one mile of seven additional EJ Populations characterized by Minority (4), Minority and Income (2), and Minority and English Isolation (1). The site is located within five miles of numerous other EJ Populations.² The Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) previously identified the "Designated Geographic Area" (DGA) for the project as one mile.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

Potential environmental impacts associated with the project include the direct alteration of 4.75 acres of land (including 2.15 acres of new land alteration and vegetation clearing), the creation of 0.37 acres of impervious surface, and the removal of 17 public shade trees.³ The project will also result in the permanent alteration of wetland resource areas including 207,114 square feet (sf) of Barrier Beach and Coastal Dune, and 86,390 sf of LSCSF.⁴ In addition, the project may require the change in use of 20,779 sf (0.48 acres) of land protected under Article 97.

Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts include the use of erosion and sedimentation controls during construction; upgrades to the existing closed drainage system; restoration of 44,714 sf of former roadway with native Coastal Dune plantings; planting 18 trees next to proposed pathways/sidewalks; and improving safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists seeking to access Gibson Park. The project will also mitigate for the loss of Article 97 land through the incorporation of the 29 Thayer Avenue property (1.6 acres) into Gibson Park.⁵

² The EEA EJ Mapper is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts>

³ Modest changes to impacts have resulted from design refinements made since the EENF. These changes represent an increase of 0.28 acres of land alteration and 0.28 acres of impervious area as well as the removal of an additional public shade tree from the EENF.

⁴ This represents an increase of 12,614 sf of impacts to Barrier Beach and Coastal Dune, and a decrease of 1,110 sf of impacts to LSCSF from the EENF resulting from the clarification of temporary and permanent impacts, and refinement of the Phase II design.

⁵ Incorporation of the 29 Thayer Avenue property into Gibson Park is proposed even if it is determined that the project will not result in an impact to Article 97 land.

Jurisdiction and Permitting

This project (Phase I and Phase II) is subject to MEPA review because it requires Agency Action and meets/exceeds the MEPA review thresholds at 301 CMR 11.03(1)(b)(3) for the disposition or change in use of land or an interest in land subject to Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth (Article 97), unless the Secretary waives or modifies the replacement land requirement pursuant to M.G.L. c. 3, § 5A and its implementing regulations;⁶ 301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(1)(a) for the alteration of Barrier Beach and Coastal Dune; 301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(1)(f) for the alteration of ½ or more acres of any other wetlands; and 301 CMR 11.03(6)(b)(2)(b) for cutting five or more living public shade trees of 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height. The project is required to prepare an EIR pursuant to 301 CMR 11.06(7)(b) because it is located within a DGA of one or more EJ Populations. The project will require an Agency Action in the form of a State Highway Access Permit (Phase I and Phase II) from MassDOT; a Construction and Access Permit (Phase I) from DCR; and an 8(m) Permit (Phase I) from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). In addition, Phase II will require a Chapter 91 (c.91) License from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP).

The project will require separate Orders of Conditions (OOC) for each phase from the Revere Conservation Commission (or in the case of an appeal, Superseding Orders of Conditions from MassDEP). The project will also require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Additionally, the project may require Federal Consistency Review by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM).

The project is seeking Financial Assistance, in the form of a MassWorks Grant, from the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED). Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction is broad in scope and extends to all aspects of the project that are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause Damage to the Environment as defined in MEPA regulations.

Tidelands

The project is anticipated to impact approximately 5,400 sf of filled landlocked Commonwealth tidelands (Phase I) as well as 450 sf of filled Commonwealth tidelands (Phase II). Consistent with the provisions of *An Act Relative to Licensing Requirements for Certain Tidelands* (2007 Mass. Acts c. 168, § 8) (the Act), as codified in M.G.L. c. 91, § 18B, I must conduct a Public Benefit Review for projects in tidelands that are required to file an EIR. The procedures for seeking a Public Benefit Determination (PBD) are set forth in 301 CMR 13.00. The Act states the following:

“In making said public benefit determination, the secretary shall consider the purpose and effect of the development; the impact on abutters and the surrounding community; enhancement to the property; benefits to the public trust rights in tidelands or other associated rights, including, but not limited to, benefits provided through previously obtained municipal permits; community activities on the development site; environmental protection and preservation; public health and safety; and the general welfare; provided further, that the secretary shall also consider the

⁶ This threshold was not previously identified as the project was not anticipated to result in a change in use of Article 97 land at the time the ENF was filed.

differences between tidelands, landlocked tidelands and great pond lands when assessing the public benefit and shall consider the practical impact of the public benefit on the development.”

Under 301 CMR 13.03(1), “the public shall have the opportunity during the MEPA public comment period(s) to comment on whether the project provides a public benefit, and the proponent shall have the opportunity to submit additional information during the MEPA process.” The Single EIR provided information relative to the project’s public benefits in accordance with the PBD regulations, but I did not receive comments specifically addressing such information.

The following addresses each of the considerations identified in the legislation.

1. purpose and effect of the development

The purpose of the project is to reconstruct the existing Route 1A/Gibson Park Drive/Lynnway interchange with a new roundabout which will enhance pedestrian and cyclist access to Gibson Park and the Pines River waterfront; provide emergency vehicles with improved access across Route 1A in the event of an emergency; improve safety by transitioning roadway users from the higher speed environment of Route 1A to the lower speed local streets; and eliminate vehicular traffic through the Riverside neighborhood by providing alternative access to Gibson Park. The project will relocate the existing primary access point for the 22 Whitin Avenue development off of Route 1A to the proposed roundabout, improve stormwater management and restore approximately 44,714 sf of former roadway with native Coastal Dune plantings.

2. impact on abutters and the surrounding community

The project is expected to benefit the community by improving vehicular, cyclist, and pedestrian safety; restoring 44,714 sf of former roadway with native Coastal Dune plantings; upgrading the existing stormwater management system; planting 18 trees next to proposed pathways/sidewalks; and providing enhanced, year-round access to Gibson Park and the Pines River waterfront.

3. enhancement to the property

The project will enhance the property through the construction of a shared-use path, including sidewalks and crosswalks, and new access drive, which will provide a direct connection from the Lynnway to Gibson Park and the Pines River waterfront. The project will also eliminate more vertical existing grades, establish a consistent eight percent grade across the project site, and restore 44,714 sf within the existing roadway configuration with native Coastal Dune vegetation, which will collectively aid in dissipating wave action from incoming floodwaters, thereby reducing the potential for erosion and wave reflection.

4. benefits to the public trust rights in tidelands or other associated rights

As determined by MassDEP, the Phase I project site meets the regulatory definition of landlocked tidelands as it is located greater than 250 ft from flowed tidelands, and was entirely separated

from flowed tidelands by one or more interconnected public way on January 1, 1984.⁷ While the landlocked nature of the Phase I project area provides limited opportunities for public access to the waterfront, the roundabout and shared-use path are intended to provide general connectivity across Route 1A, which does not currently exist, for multiple modes of travel, including bicycle and pedestrian travel.

As stated in comments on the Single EIR from the MassDEP Waterways Regulation Program (WRP), the Phase II project area is located on filled Commonwealth tidelands, subject to M.G.L. c.91 jurisdiction and the Waterways Regulations at 310 CMR 9.00, and will require the submittal of a c.91 License Application (BRP WW01). Phase II is intended to further enhance connectivity and access to the waterfront through the construction of a new access drive which will connect Gibson Park to the roundabout. As part of the alternatives analysis conducted for Phase II, the Proponent evaluated different configurations of connect Gibson Park to the roundabout, including configurations that would have avoided impacts on Commonwealth tidelands. However, all such alternatives were ultimately dismissed due to the projected impacts on traffic operations (congestion) within the roundabout. While a formal determination of water dependency will be made during the c.91 Licensing process, Phase II is likely to be characterized as a nonwater-dependent infrastructure facility, which will be evaluated pursuant to the standards at 310 CMR 9.55. Additionally, as the site is located on Commonwealth tidelands, the Proponent will need to demonstrate that all feasible measures have been taken to avoid or minimize detriments to the water-related interests of the public and provide open space for active or passive recreation at or near the water's edge. MassDEP WRP will finalize the required public benefits for Phase II during subsequent permitting.

5. community activities on the development site

The project will provide enhanced community access to Gibson Park through the construction of a new access road and a shared-use path, connecting Gibson Park to the Lynnway, while eliminating unwanted vehicular traffic from the adjacent Riverside Neighborhood. Increased access to Gibson Park will promote public enjoyment and access to the waterfront, recreational sporting opportunities, and open lawn space that has the capability to host community events and activities.

6. environmental protection and preservation

Measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts as summarized in the Single EIR Certificate are as follows:

Environmental Justice (EJ) / Public Health

- Continue to engage the community (including both community groups and residents) and provide opportunity for meaningful community involvement as the project progresses.
- Provide timely communication, in digital format, to Revere residents regarding the anticipated construction timeline, anticipated traffic interruptions/delays, and planned mitigation measures prior to the start of construction and periodically throughout construction.
- Enhance pedestrian infrastructure throughout the study area through the installation of additional sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signal equipment.

⁷ The Phase I project area is located entirely within the existing State Highway Layout for Route 1A and will be generally located within the footprint of the existing Route 1A/Lynnway interchange.

- Acquire the 1.6-acre property at 29 Thayer Avenue (former North Shore Boatworks Property) which will be incorporated into Gibson Park as public recreation space as part of the related Gibson Park Resiliency Project.
- Relocate/reconstruct the tennis courts elsewhere in Gibson Park as part of the related Gibson Park Resiliency Project, such that they will remain as a recreational resource.
- Improve the existing stormwater management system through the installation of 23 new deep sump catch basins, which are designed to provide peak rate attenuation up to the current 10-year storm event, provide 25% total suspended solids (TSS) removal and reduce post-construction stormwater flows directed to the 15-inch storm drain within the Lynnway.
- Restoration of 44,714 sf of former roadway area with native Coastal Dune plantings.
- Plant 18 trees adjacent to proposed pathways/sidewalks to provide shading benefits to the community.

Land Alteration and Impervious Surfaces

- Restoration of 44,714 sf of former roadway area with native Coastal Dune plantings.
- Plant 18 trees adjacent to proposed pathways/sidewalks to provide shading benefits to the community.
- Improve the existing stormwater management system through the installation of 23 new deep sump catch basins, which are designed to provide peak rate attenuation up to the current 10-year storm event, provide 25% total suspended solids (TSS) removal and reduce post-construction stormwater flows directed to the 15-inch storm drain within the Lynnway.

Article 97

- Continue to coordinate with the EEA Land Division and the National Park Service in determining whether the project will result in a change of use in Article 97 land.
- Comply with the procedures of the Open Space Act and the overlapping requirements of the EEA Article 97 Policy.
- Acquire the 1.6-acre property at 29 Thayer Avenue (former North Shore Boatworks Property) which will be incorporated into Gibson Park as public recreation space as part of the related Gibson Park Resiliency Project.
- Relocate/reconstruct the tennis courts elsewhere in Gibson Park as part of the related Gibson Park Resiliency Project, such that they will remain as a recreational resource.

Wetlands and Stormwater

- Comply with all Standard and Special Conditions included in the Order of Conditions to be issued by the Revere Conservation Commission (or MassDEP in the case of an appeal).
- Prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).
- Protect wetland resource areas from secondary impacts during construction through the implementation of erosion and sedimentation controls, incorporating BMPs.
- Restoration of 44,714 sf of former roadway area with native Coastal Dune plantings.
- Improve the existing stormwater management system through the installation of 23 new deep sump catch basins, which are designed to provide peak rate attenuation up to the current 10-year storm event, provide 25% total suspended solids (TSS) removal and reduce post-construction stormwater flows directed to the 15-inch storm drain within the Lynnway.

Traffic and Transportation

- Enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety, and access to Gibson Park through the installation of sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signal equipment.

Climate Change

- Improve the existing stormwater management system through the installation of 23 new deep sump catch basins, which are designed to provide peak rate attenuation up to the current 10-year storm event, provide 25% total suspended solids (TSS) removal and reduce post-construction stormwater flows directed to the 15-inch storm drain within the Lynnway.
- Restoration of 44,714 sf of former roadway area with native Coastal Dune plantings.
- Plant 18 trees adjacent to proposed pathways/sidewalks to provide shading benefits to the community.

Construction Period

- Implement mitigation measures to prevent stormwater contamination including among others, use of erosion and sedimentation controls.
- Limit fugitive dust emissions using industry-best practices, such as watering, sweeping, and wheel-washing.
- Recycling of excavated material to the extent feasible and proper disposal of materials that cannot be recycled.
- Minimize construction period noise impacts to the extent feasible through the use of mufflers, selection of quieter equipment, and minimizing idling.

7. public health and safety, and the general welfare

The project will promote public health and safety by enhance pedestrian and cyclist access to Gibson Park and the Pines River waterfront; provide emergency vehicles with improved access across Route 1A in the event of an emergency; improve safety by transitioning roadway users from the higher speed environment of Route 1A to the lower speed local streets; and eliminate vehicular traffic through the Riverside neighborhood by providing alternative access to Gibson Park. The project will also eliminate more vertical existing grades, establish a consistent eight percent grade across the project site, and restore 44,714 sf within the existing roadway configuration with native Coastal Dune vegetation.

Enforcement of Public Benefits

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 30, s. 62L, the Proponent shall file a copy of the Certificate on the Single EIR and this PBD with MassDEP within 30 days of today's date to notify it that work will be conducted within tidelands. MassDEP will then have the authority to enforce the conditions outlined herein and in the PBD consistent with Chapter 30.

I recognize that the public benefit commitments may be subject to certain revisions as the project proceeds. If the public benefits to be provided should change, the Proponent is instructed to consult the MEPA Office to determine whether the change is sufficiently material to require the submission of a Notice of Project Change (NPC) pursuant to 301 CMR 11.10. If it is clear that the change(s) are material and would increase environmental impacts, the Proponent may submit an NPC without first consulting the MEPA Office.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, I hereby determine that the project will have a public benefit in accordance with M.G.L. c. 91, § 18B. This Public Benefit Determination will be published in the *Environmental Monitor* on February 24, 2025.



February 14, 2025
Date

Rebecca L. Tepper

Comments received on the Single EIR:

- 1/01/2025 Robert Boisvert
- 1/08/2025 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Waterways Regulation Program (WRP)
- 1/10/2025 Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- 1/16/2025 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

RLT/NJM/njm