



February 26, 2018

BY EMAIL: alex.strysky@state.ma.us

Alex Strysky, Environmental Analyst
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Comments on Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for development of
Wellington Woods, 320 Middlesex Ave., Medford, MA (EEA No. 15804)

Dear Mr. Strysky:

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is pleased to submit comments on the Environmental Notification Form for the Wellington Woods project, 320 Middlesex Ave., Medford, MA. We believe that this project could be a model transit-oriented development with functional and beautiful green infrastructure that benefits residents and the surrounding environment. By remediating and redeveloping an existing brownfield site bringing it up to current environmental standards, the project will 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 Wellington Woods to advance and benefit from this initiative, as outlined in the comments below.

Connectivity

The site is well located for providing access to the Malden River. MyRWA has created a framework and vision for a seamless waterfront park system along both sides of the river, connecting communities in Medford, Malden and Everett to this important natural resource. Currently, a little more than 1 mile of the 3.5 miles of shoreline is accessible green space – this is a result of generations of industrial uses. Thanks to local leadership and several brownfield redevelopments, the Malden River is on its way to becoming a central open space amenity for all three cities. MyRWA is also working on connecting neighborhoods to the Malden Greenway. A key project of the greenway is the Wellington Connector, an envisioned walking/biking path linking neighborhoods west of the Malden River, which passes adjacent to the Wellington Woods site. It will be a valuable amenity for Wellington Woods residents and will benefit the surrounding neighborhoods by providing access to the Malden River, Wellington T Station and nearby retail centers. **We ask that the developer of Wellington Woods contribute to implementation of this project, assist with long-term stewardship and provide adequate linkages to these greenways (for those walking and biking).**

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We urge the developer to not only improve access to the river, but to increase active transportation as well as contribute to a neighborhood-feel rather than one dominated by cars. The project is designed to attract a commuter population with its close proximity to public transportation facilities. An MBTA bus stop is located at the entrance/exit to the Property; however, the bus stop is merely a sign along the sidewalk. **We ask that the developer contribute to a covered bus stop to encourage use of public transit and to mitigate traffic congestion.**

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 1.2 acres and increase pervious areas and landscaping. Additionally, we are pleased to see that the proposed development includes a variance to reduce parking to <2 spaces per residential unit and includes a plan to locate the majority of the parking spaces underground.

However, the stormwater management plan is to collect stormwater from paved surfaces and roof areas throughout the project site via drainage manholes and piping, with the majority of the stormwater runoff conveyed to an underground infiltration area. **We urge the developer to not only add bioretention/rain gardens that are functional and aesthetically pleasing but also to treat the new streets and surface parking areas as "green streets" such as linear rain gardens to spread out the infiltration across the site.** We also encourage the developer to include solar panels, or make the roofs "solar ready," as part of the development to promote energy conservation and resilience and to reduce the heat island effect.

In closing, we are encouraged to see a development that will remediate the existing site and bring more people to neighborhoods surrounding the Malden River. We hope to continue to partner with the city and developer to make connectivity to 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,



Amber Christoffersen
Mystic Greenways Director
Mystic River Watershed Association

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