

August 9, 2023



Ms. Purvi Patel, Environmental Analyst
MEPA Office
purvi.patel@mass.gov

Dear Ms. Patel,

I'm writing on behalf of the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), whose mission is to protect and restore the Mystic River. Our vision is a healthy, vibrant, and resilient Mystic River Watershed for the benefit of all our community members. MyRWA is working with residents in the Lower Mystic to protect water quality, restore important habitats, build climate resilience, transform parks and paths, inspire youth and grow community. We are pleased to have advocated over the past decade for including an elevated berm in Draw 7 Park that will help prevent upstream coastal flooding from a projected 2070 1% coastal storm (approximately five feet above record flooding in 2018). As you know, this is an integral part of a regional strategy to protect over 100,000 residents and over \$60 billion in real estate from saltwater flooding in the lower Mystic and Charles Rivers.

We are also thrilled that a revitalized Draw Seven Park will provide better opportunities for recreation, access to nature, and social gatherings. The living shoreline's incorporation is great to see, and we especially appreciate the inclusion of the migration zone in the design. With regards to mobility, we appreciate the design's incorporation of a renewed multi-use path, as well as coordination with the Mystic River Pedestrian Bridge, and efforts to not preclude a future headhouse extension for MBTA Assembly Station.

When revitalization of Draw 7 was first considered, summer heat waves were not as much of a focus as they are now. As DCR and the project team finalizes the design, we ask that you include additional amenities, especially for low-income area residents and visitors of all ages and abilities who need opportunities to stay cool and healthy.

- For on-land amenities, we request improved cooling amenities for the park, such as:
 - Splash pads surrounded by shady seating,
 - Water fountains,
 - A misting station, and
 - Additional shaded areas with trees and structures for gathering.

- For riverine amenities, we request clear paths with small viewing/water access platforms across the living shoreline. These will serve multiple functions, such as:
 - Manage erosion from "herd paths",
 - Accommodate existing fishing needs (most folks don't fish from the pier but instead along the shoreline)
 - Act as cool spaces to sit by the water, and
 - Allow for the docking of non-motorized boats. If provided both upstream and downstream from the dam, they will allow for river portaging and a unique recreational experience for its urban context.

We look forward to engaging DCR and the project team as this exciting project advances, and appreciate your office's continued efforts to center public outreach in the environmental review process.

Thank you for your continued dedicated work and partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Herron". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Patrick Herron
Executive Director