



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

June 9, 2020

Secretary Kathleen Theoharides
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900 (9th floor)
Boston, MA 02114

ATTN: Alex Strycky, MEPA Office

RE: Northern Avenue Bridge, Fort Point Channel, Boston, MA; MHC# RC.2913; **EEA# 16194**

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

Staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) have reviewed the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) submitted for the Northern Avenue Bridge Replacement Project and have the following comments.

The proposed project includes the demolition of the historic pivot swing bridge, three granite and concrete side span piers, and the Bridge Tender's House. The proposed project also includes the removal of the existing timber piles within the draw fender pier and draw fender pier over which the swing span sits when in the open position. The central swing pier is proposed to be retained. A new bridge is proposed to replace the historic Northern Avenue Bridge. As part of the new bridge, the following are proposed: construction of new piers, construction of the new bridge superstructure, replacement of the western bridge abutment and reconstruction of the eastern bridge abutment, construction of the promenade, and a construction of approaches to the bridge to accommodate the bridge profile and to make connections to the harbor walk.

The Northern Avenue Bridge is listed in the State Register of Historic Places and was formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register. The Fort Point Channel, the Northern Avenue Bridge, the Northern Avenue Bridge Tender's House, and the Fort Point Channel Seawalls are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as contributing elements of the Fort Point Channel Historic District. The Northern Avenue Bridge, completed in 1908, is significant as one of only two triple-barreled swing bridges in the Massachusetts Highway Department's statewide bridge inventory. The bridge is also significant for its role in the commercial development of South Boston. Additional information including Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation can be accessed via the MHC website at: <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=BOS.9000>

The ENF does not identify any State permits in Attachment 4, which only lists Federal and Municipal permits. The MHC requests that all State permits be disclosed.

The MHC also requests that the proponent list all State and Federal funding sources. The copy of the Project Notification Form (PNF) and associated attachments presented in Attachment 5 of the ENF references Federal funding.

The ENF does not discuss any potential impact to the Fort Point Channel Seawalls as part of this project. The ENF also does not discuss in detail the work to be completed on the central swing pier or identify all of the salvaged components and their treatment prior to installation on the new bridge.

If an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required, the MHC requests that the scope includes MHC's requests for information above.

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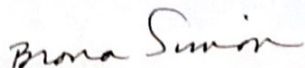
The project requires federal permits from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and therefore subject to federal review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (36 CFR 800).

Additionally, The Northern Avenue Bridge has previously been subject to Section 106 review as part of a 1989 project that constructed a new bridge next to the Northern Avenue Bridge. The lead federal agency for the 1989 project was the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The "conditional no adverse effect" finding made by FHWA in 1989 required that a Preservation Plan be developed for the Northern Avenue Bridge. The PNF in Attachment 5 lists FHWA as a source of funding for this project.

The MHC looks forward to the lead federal agency's finding of effect and initiation of the Section 106 process.

These comments are offered to assist in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (36 CFR 800) and MEPA (301 CMR 11). Please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Sherva of my staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

xc: Jeff McEwen, FHWA
John McVann, FHWA
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Michael Creasey, National Park Service
Elizabeth Merritt, National Trust for Historic Preservation
Michael Tyrrell, Friends of the Northern Avenue Bridge
Paul Farrell, Friends of the Northern Avenue Bridge
Stacey Beuttell, Walk Boston
Jack Glassman, BSA Historic Resources Committee
Carol Chirico, GSA
Judge Douglas Woodcock, Moakely Courthouse
Rachel Borgattis, Friends of Fort Point Channel
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