



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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March 16, 2000

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CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
FINAL MASTER PLAN

PROJECT NAME : Boston Marine Industrial Park (BMIP)
Master Plan
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Boston (South Boston)
PROJECT WATERSHED : Boston Harbor
EOEA NUMBER : 8161 (and 11816)
PROJECT PROPONENT : Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)/
Boston Economic Development and
Industrial Corporation (EDIC)
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : February 8, 2000

As Secretary of Environmental Affairs, I hereby determine that the Final Master Plan submitted on the above project **adequately and properly complies** with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and with its implementing regulations (301 CMR 11.00).

The Final Master Plan represents the culmination of a planning process that began in the 1970's. The issuance of this Certificate marks a major step in the planning for the Seaport District, and paves the way for the issuance of a Master Chapter 91 License for BMIP and a streamlined regulatory framework for future development in the park. I am confident that the Final Master Plan will guide the future development of BMIP in a manner that ensures a strong manufacturing and water-dependent industrial base in the City of Boston. The Final Master Plan establishes a framework for future development within BMIP that is consistent with Chapter 91 regulations, Designated Port Area regulations, and local zoning. The Final Master Plan implements



recommendations of the Port of Boston Economic Development Plan, and helps ensure that present and future water-dependent industrial development will take place in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Project Description

The Boston Marine Industrial Park (BMIP) consists of 191 acres of filled and flowed tidelands in South Boston and comprises a major portion of the South Boston Designated Port Area (DPA). The BMIP is located approximately 3/4 mile from downtown Boston, and sits directly across the harbor from Logan Airport, to which it is connected via the Ted Williams Tunnel. Summer Street and Northern Avenue provide direct vehicle access to the site. Boston Harbor borders the BMIP on three sides.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)/ Boston Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC), which currently owns the site, has the charge of promoting industry in the City of Boston through retention and creation of manufacturing jobs. The BMIP currently houses approximately 200 businesses employing about 3,500 people.

Jurisdiction

The proponent has prepared the Master Plan pursuant to the 1989 Certificate on the Parcel E parking structure. In addition, the project will require a Master Chapter 91 License for BMIP as a whole. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction extends over areas where the project may have significant environmental impacts, and these impacts fall within the broad subject matter of the Chapter 91 License.

Procedural History

EDIC purchased the BMIP (then known as the former South Boston Naval Annex) in 1977, and described an extensive renovation plan in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which the Secretary of Environmental Affairs certified as adequate in 1978 (EOEA #2474). This document represented a "Master Plan" for the renovation and conversion of the Naval Annex into the BMIP. At the same time, the City approved an Economic Development Plan (EDP) to guide the development of BMIP into a diversified industrial area.

In 1983, the Secretary certified the adequacy of a Final EIR (EOEA #4427) for renovations and redevelopment of a 1.6 million square foot structure known as Building 114. This building was a part of the former Army base adjacent to the BMIP. EDIC added building 114 to the BMIP, and the City approved an amended EDP for the BMIP that reflected the redevelopment plan for Building

114. Building 114 now houses a variety of light manufacturing firms, companies related to the home furnishing and interior design industries, and light industrial and warehouse space.

In 1989, EDIC filed a Notice of Project Change to the original Master Plan that proposed to construct a parking garage on Parcel E, to consolidate several surface parking lots in the BMIP. The Secretary did not require further review of the Project Change for the garage, but as part of the decision required that EDIC prepare a new Environmental Notification Form (EOEA #8161, the current file) to initiate the process of updating the Master Plan in light of various regulatory changes.

EDIC submitted a Draft Master Plan late in 1990, although this document was withdrawn from the MEPA process prior to the issuance of any Certificate. The Secretary revised the scope for the Master Plan in April 1994 to respond to further changes in existing port and waterfront regulations. BRA/EDIC submitted the Draft Master Plan in 1996. In response to numerous concerns with that document, the Secretary required the preparation of a Master Plan Update to resolve several outstanding planning and regulatory issues. BRA/EDIC submitted the Master Plan Update in 1998. The Certificate on the Master Plan Update laid out the additional analysis required for the Final Master Plan now completing MEPA review.

Final Master Plan

In general, the Final Master Plan has adequately responded to the issues identified in the Certificate on the Master Plan Update. The comments received have reflected a high overall degree of satisfaction with the analysis in the Final Master Plan. The comments highlight several issues that will be resolved during the Chapter 91 Licensing review by the Department of Environmental Protection.

One of the central commitments in the Final Master Plan involves the designation of BMIP as a Marine Industrial Park pursuant to Chapter 91 regulations. This designation ensures that a minimum of 67% of the BMIP will be devoted to water-dependent industrial uses and supporting DPA uses. General industrial uses and a small amount of commercial use is allowed for the remainder of BMIP. The current use of BMIP consists of 74% maritime industrial, 22% general industrial, and 4% commercial. As the Boston Harbor Association has pointed out, it is thus possible for some displacement of marine industrial uses to occur over time as leases for maritime industrial tenants expire. I ask that the proponent and the Department of Environmental Protection consider methods of encouraging a maritime industrial percentage

higher than the bare minimum required by the Marine Industrial Park designation.

The Final Master Plan contains only a general discussion of stormwater management and recycling at BMIP. The proponent should develop an appropriate level of detail on these issues during the Chapter 91 Licensing process.

One issue of concern to many commenters relates to the nature and extent of pedestrian access (particularly to the waterfront) within the working port. The proponent will need to balance the goal of accommodating pedestrian access to the waterfront with the legitimate safety and logistical concerns presented by the industrial activity taking place within BMIP. In general, I believe that a thoughtful system of "point access" outlined in the Final Master Plan balances the two sometimes competing goals. The Master Chapter 91 License can address this issue in more detail.

The Final Master Plan establishes that projects proposed outside footprints shown in figure 3-5 of the Final Master Plan must file a Notice of Project Change under MEPA. As noted by Massport, this procedural requirement would only apply to projects that individually meet one or more MEPA filing thresholds.

The Certificate on the BankBoston Harborlights Pavilion project (EOEA #11816) amended the scope for the Final Master Plan to include a siting study for a long-term location for the Pavilion, temporarily located on Wharf 8 in BMIP. The Final Master Plan includes this siting study, which evaluated a potential universe of sites for a permanent facility and focused the search on a handful of sites that met suitability criteria. The analysis contained in the Final Master Plan has generally responded adequately to the requirements of the Certificate. While a final decision on a permanent location for the Pavilion will take substantial additional analysis, I am pleased that the current location was eliminated from further study as a permanent location because of its location within a Designated Port Area. This decision helps to underscore the importance of reserving Wharf 8 over the long term for maritime industrial use.

I ask that the Department of Environmental Protection consider the comments received during MEPA review when finalizing the Chapter 91 License.

March 16, 2000

Date


Bob Durand

Comments received:

3/9/00 Massachusetts Convention Center Authority
3/9/00 Coastal Zone Management
3/9/00 Sheffield van Buren
3/9/00 South Boston Design Advisory Committee
3/9/00 Lower End Political Action Committee
3/9/00 Commercial Lobster Co. (by Gerard Doherty)
3/10/00 Massport
3/13/00 Conservation Law Foundation
3/13/00 The Boston Harbor Association
3/14/00 Boston Environment Department
3/16/00 Boston Transportation Department

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