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DETERMINATION OF NATURAL RESOURCE VALUE

PROJECT: Proposed Disposition of a Portion of Land at O'Neill Park
MUNICIPALITY: City of Lawrence
EEA FILE NUMBER: A97_013_149
PROJECT PROPONENT: Massachusetts Department of Transportation
DATE: Month 19, 2025

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 3, § 5A, in order to use for another purpose or otherwise dispose of land or an interest in land subject to Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ("Article 97"), a public entity must, *inter alia*, "identify replacement land or an interest in land, which is not already subject to said Article XCVII, in a comparable location and *that is of equal or greater natural resource value, as determined by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs . . .*" (emphasis added). This document provides the required determination of natural resource value as to the above-referenced proposal ("Project").

This determination constitutes solely a determination of natural resource value pursuant to M.G.L. c. 3, § 5A(a)(ii) and does not indicate that the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs takes any position on the Project or on whether it complies with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs ("EEA") Article 97 Land Disposition Policy or any law or regulation. This determination reflects the independent analysis of EEA and does not create any right, benefit, or duty, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by any party in any judicial or administrative matter.

Project Description:

The Project is described in the Alternatives Analysis submitted by the City of Lawrence, attached hereto as Appendix A ("Alternatives Analysis"). The Project will involve the disposition of approximately 77 square feet of land that is part of O'Neill Park and that is protected by Article 97. This disposition is part of a project being undertaken by the City of Lawrence and Massachusetts Department of Transportation to improve safety at the intersection of Amesbury Street and Lawrence Street.

Information considered:

This determination is based on a review of the Alternatives Analysis, other materials submitted by the proponent and EEA's independent analysis. EEA analysis included a site visit to view the Impacted Land and Replacement Land on January 23, 2025, and the use of GIS to characterize the natural resource value of the Impacted Land and Replacement Land. Of note, O'Neill Park received federal funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The National Park Service's (NPS) approval letter (Appendix B) indicates compliance with the NPS conversion requirements.

Characterization of Impacted Land and Replacement Land:

The Impacted Land is a 77 square foot corner of the park that is primarily sidewalk, and the Natural Resource Value can most accurately be categorized as access to the recreational facility. The Replacement Land is directly adjacent to the impacted land and will include 363 feet of sidewalk area, expanding the size of the park and providing for access to park and its recreational facilities. Access will not be negatively impacted as a result of the project.

Determination:

The Replacement Land is of comparable or greater Natural Resource Value as compared to the Impacted Land. Both the Impacted Land and Replacement Land have natural resource value consistent with provision of access to the park and its recreational facilities. Access will not be negatively impacted and the disposition will result in an increased area for the park.