

March 14, 2022

Ione Hughes, Program Coordinator  
Division of Ecological Restoration  
251 Causeway Street,  
Suite 400  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: **DRAFT** REQUEST FOR RESPONSE by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Division of Ecological Restoration: Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance

Joint Proposal:

The Town of Chelmsford and Chelmsford Water District for the Watershed Lane Culvert Crossing

Dear Ms. Hughes:

The Town of Chelmsford ('Town') and Chelmsford Water District ('District') are pleased to submit the enclosed proposal. While the Town and the District have a close working relationship, this is the first time the two entities have teamed to submit for a joint grant for this important project. The project consists of replacing two large culverts which allow River Meadow Brook to cross Watershed Lane in Chelmsford. The reinforced concrete culverts were put into place in the 1960's when the District just had a garage on the property. Fast forward 60 years and now the whole District operations (financial and operations) are located at 20 Watershed Lane.

Watershed Lane is located in an environmentally sensitive area, specifically the wetland and flood plain of the River Meadow Brook. The Brook has flooded several times over the past 15 years and blocks access to the District Operation and Financial Building each time it has flooded. Coupled with this, the current culvert system does not meet the State's Stream Crossing Standards. The proposed system invests into a new crossing using a modified rectangular box culvert system to allow for a more natural and environmentally friendly design.

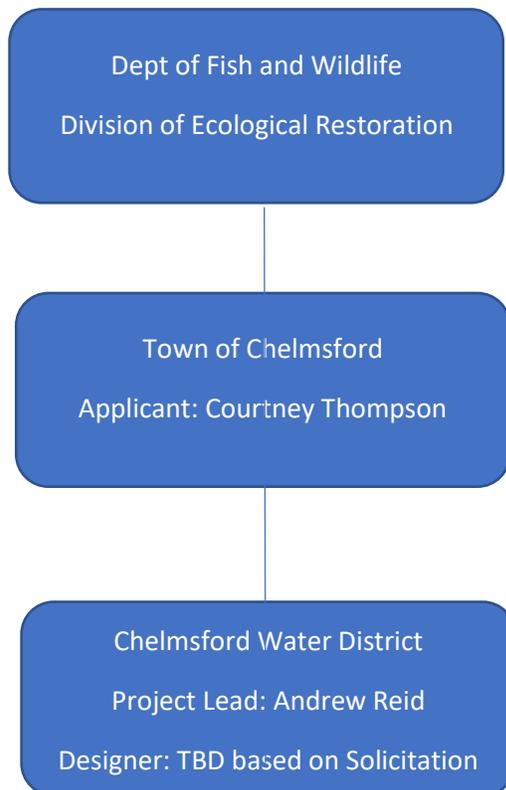
While Watershed Lane can be raised to eliminate flooding across the road, this would negatively impact the neighboring wetlands. As such, part of the proposed solution is to keep the road elevations the same, while providing a secondary road access. This emergency road access moves the entrance closer to the Town's Environmental Justice community (now about 0.56 miles). This community is listed as a minority and has a propensity to come directly, in person, to pay bills or set up payment plans.

This proposal is requesting the Culvert Grant to cover the bulk of the design effort for this crossing. The District is also moving forward with the FEMA/MEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant application process for the construction portion of the culvert crossing. That solicitation is currently out and a copy is provided in the attachments.

The Town, recognizing the importance of the access road, not only from an operational perspective, but also environmental prospective, has teamed with the District to be an advocate for the project. As such, we would like to clarify how the correspondence for the project will proceed as well as clarify some of the responses in the submission portal.

The organization chart for the proposed project is provided in Figure No. 1. All direct correspondence will be through the Town.

**Figure No. 1: Organization Chart for the Watershed Lane Culver Crossing**



While the Town supports the project, the Town does not own the project; the District owns the crossing of interest. As this the case, the property is considered a private way. However, the District is a public agency and the road and crossing is solely intended for public use. This is a deviation from the strict interpretation of the RFR requirements for the project being located on a public way. We ask that the review committee find this deviation as an acceptable use of a private way for public means and hence meets the intention of the RFR for a public way.

We look forward to the Division of Ecological Restoration's review of this proposal and hopeful positive response. If you should have any questions regarding the proposal, please do not hesitate to contact the project Applicant, Courtney Thompson, at the contact information below.

Best regards,

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