

CHESTO MEANS BUSINESS

A new ferry terminal on the Mystic? Boston, Everett officials team up to restore old pumping station.

By [Jon Chesto](#) Globe Staff, Updated March 6, 2025, 12:31 p.m.



Boston and Everett officials are teaming up to build a riverfront walkway and to try to redevelop the old Alford Street pumping station. DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Thousands of drivers whiz by the vacant brick building perched precariously over the Mystic River every day without giving it a second thought. But city officials in Everett and Boston have been giving this former sewage pumphouse a lot of thought lately, as they

eye it for potential restoration and redevelopment amid the broader rebirth underway around the Encore Boston Harbor casino across the street.

Although it's on the Everett side of the river, the 15,000-square-foot pumphouse actually sits within a tiny sliver of Boston that extends along Alford Street (Route 99). Consultants are about to finish studying the feasibility of redoing the 19th-century building, as soon as this month, on behalf of the cities of Everett and Boston, and funded by state gaming commission funds.

Ideas have ranged from turning it into a community center, to a kayak and canoe launch, to a beer hall. The leading concept, though, seems to be a ferry terminal, in part because the Kraft Group is eyeing the site next door [to build a soccer stadium](#) for the New England Revolution.

“We're really excited about it,” said Patrick Herron, executive director of the [Mystic River Watershed Association](#). “What a way to breathe life into a historic building on the edge of the water.”

Kathy Abbott, chief executive of the nonprofit [Boston Harbor Now](#), said the site is an ideal location for a ferry terminal because it's on the Boston Harbor side of the Alford Street bridge, whose low height prevents many commercial boats from passing under it. (Casino owner Wynn Resorts [commissioned ferries purpose-built](#) to fit under the bridge to serve casino customers.)

While a boat landing could help with game-day transit for pro soccer games, Abbott said any terminal's full potential would depend on whether other public transportation projects [proposed for the area](#) come to fruition, such as a Silver Line bus-rapid-transit extension or a new commuter rail stop next to the casino.

The conversations around the pumphouse, currently owned by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, started a few years ago, long before state lawmakers approved legislation in November that rezones the adjacent site for a soccer stadium. That

legislation removes the site next door, home to a shuttered power plant, from what's known as a Designated Port Area, where only marine industrial uses can be developed.

However, per state officials, the legislation left the pumphouse property in the DPA. That could pose a challenge to any redevelopment of the site, although a ferry terminal would be an allowed use within the zone. Other challenges include the limited space for parking and a dilapidated seawall that needs to be shored up.

Herron said he expects state regulators would be willing to remove the site from the DPA because it's not currently home to industrial use. (The MWRA stopped pumping at the facility in 1993, replacing it with a more modern facility across the street, though an active sewer pipe passes under one portion of the 1890s building.)

Everett and Boston officials are also engaged in discussions about a harborwalk extension that would bring the path along the Mystic River [from the casino](#) across the street, under the Alford Street bridge, and around the pumphouse to the stadium site.

Tom Philbin, an environmental planner with Everett Mayor Carlo DeMaria's administration, said Massachusetts Gaming Commission grants have so far provided nearly \$250,000 to design the 1,500-foot harborwalk extension and around \$200,000 to study the feasibility of restoring the pumphouse. (The money comes out of [community mitigation funds](#) overseen by the gaming commission for casino host cities and nearby communities.)

In [a preliminary community agreement](#) signed with DeMaria in late 2023, the Kraft Group agreed to pay for completing the harborwalk extension from the casino to the soccer stadium site. However, the Revs and Patriots ownership is not currently involved in the talks around the pumphouse's future.

Stacy Thompson, interim executive director at [Historic Boston](#), the primary consultant studying the pumphouse's viability, said the restoration hinges on the eventual price tag. But she remains hopeful that the pumphouse could become an important piece in the

broader mosaic of this new urban neighborhood gradually taking shape. At this time, any final decision on the building's fate would ultimately be up to the MWRA.

“There’s so much potential,” Thompson said. “Could it be a ferry station or a landing point? Yes. Could it be something else that serves the community? Yes. We’re not there yet [but] we’re getting closer to understanding what’s possible.”

Jon Chesto can be reached at jon.chesto@globe.com. Follow him [@jonchesto](https://twitter.com/jonchesto).

[Show comments](#)

©2025 Boston Globe Media Partners, LLC