



May 13, 2019

Michael Sinatra
Project Manager
BPDA
1 City Hall Sq.
Boston, MA 02201

RE: 15-19 Congress St. Notice of Project Change (NPC)/Hotel Proposal

Dear Mr. Sinatra:

On behalf of the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID), I would like to offer my support for the hotel proposed for 15-19 Congress St. by Hemisphere Development.

Recently, Hemisphere Development and its architectural team, Feingold Alexander, presented the hotel plans to BID staff members. We reviewed numerous aspects of the hotel proposal: its design, materials, lighting scheme, site plan, operational logistics, and more.

I am enthusiastic for this proposal for a number of reasons. It would complete the Congress Square redevelopment plan, revitalizing its remaining dormant parcels. It would add much-needed hotel rooms to the city, servicing Downtown's tens of thousands of annual visitors, and would complement the nearby Hyatt Centric and Ames Hilton hotels, creating a lively hotel cluster. Design-wise, I am pleased that Feingold Alexander has been charged with preserving these buildings' rich architectural legacies--in particular, the spectacular, eye-catching green fire escapes that spiral down their Quaker Lane-facing façades, which can be seen from several vantage points.

I would like to ask that Quaker Lane, an already historic, publicly-accessible way, be reimagined as a unique placemaking opportunity. We believe this space could be transformed into a more user-friendly space during the day and evening hours--thus complementing the ongoing momentum in the Financial District for these types of venues.

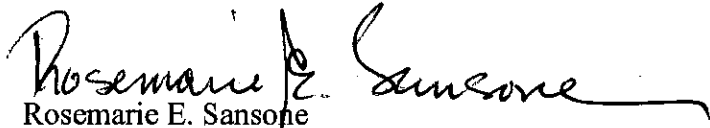
Consider what has already been built and is underway: Boston Properties' Exchange at 100 Federal St. (opened spring 2018); Rockpoint Group's High Street Place food hall at 160 Federal St./100 High St. (opening fall 2019); and MP Boston's Connector lobby space at Winthrop Center (opening slated for 2022). This trio of public spaces--each just a five-minute walk from Quaker Lane--will begin to create a new and vibrant destination, extending the Financial District's activation beyond the traditional 9 am-5 pm work week.

Hemisphere Development's plan already calls for some activation of the space, with tables and chairs flush against the Quaker Lane-facing wall of 19 Congress Street. But is there an opportunity to do even more? The BID staff has conducted surveys and convened focus groups, the results from which indicate that today's Downtown office workers and visitors are looking for more and a greater variety of special public places to enjoy after traditional working hours--and a reimagined Quaker Lane could

help satisfy that public demand. We are eager to explore that possibility in collaboration with the BPDA project management team, Hemisphere Development and Feingold Alexander, and all the Quaker Lane abutters.

The Downtown Boston BID is a private not-for-profit corporation that provides supplemental services in Downtown Boston. Designed to benefit property owners, businesses, visitors, students, and residents, it is committed to achieving downtown's full potential as a premier economic center and vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosemarie E. Sansone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Rosemarie E. Sansone

President & CEO

Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID)



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR JOSEPH A. BONCORE

First Suffolk and Middlesex District

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 112
BOSTON, MA 02133-1053
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JOSEPH.BONCORE@MASENATE.GOV
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March 4, 2019

Mr. Michael Sinatra
Boston Planning and Development Agency
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

RE: 15 Congress Street

Mr. Sinatra,

I am pleased to comment on the proposed hotel at 15 Congress Street. I have received feedback from constituents in the hotel industry in regard to traffic mitigation as it relates to Hotel use on this site.

Constituents who are familiar with hotel operations and transportation related issues at hotels downtown have expressed concern to me in regard to (1) how a pick up and drop off would work on Quaker lane at this proposed hotel and (2) the amount of automobile-related pick up and drop off this hotel will create on Congress Street.

In regard to the first issue, according to your filing the proposed hotel and restaurant will add 140 new automobile trips on a weekday, with the intended pick up and drop off location to be on a side street with a single load corridor currently known as Quaker Lane. For this pick up and drop off location to be successful the operator of the automobile would need to be familiar with Congress Square and access this single load corridor via Devonshire Street where a 163 key hotel and full service restaurant just opened. Even if pick up and drop offs would occur at this location, the proposal assumes no waiting time as a backup of cars waiting for guests would spill out onto Devonshire. Similarly, the proponent assumes deliveries will happen on Quaker Lane and distributors would keep deliveries to off-hours. We all know this is rarely the case in reality.

This leads to the second issue: While the proponents intention is to have pick up and drop off on Quaker Lane, we know that with the proliferation of TNC's in the City of Boston there is a high probability that both TNC, taxi and other modes of vehicular pick up and drop off will occur on

Chairman
JOINT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AND
JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
Vice Chairman
JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTHCARE FINANCING

FINANCIAL SERVICES
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REVENUE

Congress Street. While this is not the proponents' intention, it is the reality of this new mode of transportation. A hotel guest or restaurant patron will simply see the hotel or restaurant sign on Congress Street and remark "you can let me off here" creating a dangerous situation for other motorists, cyclists and hotel employees.

I encourage the proponent to engage with hotel employees in regard to these issues or retain the projects approved residential use and help provide more housing here in the City of Boston.

Sincerely,



Senator Joseph Boncore
First Suffolk and Middlesex District

cc: Brian Golden, Director
Jonathan Greeley, Director of Development Review

Michael Sinatra
BPDA
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Michael Sinatra,

My name is Khalid Zidouh and I am against the proposed hotel at 15 Congress Street. As a hotel doorman, I know how bad traffic is in this city. Putting a hotel drop off area on Quaker Street is going to be a mess. There's going to be increased traffic on Devonshire and confusion on Congress Streets. Already during rush hour, Congress Street is simply too busy. All that traffic is going to get in the way of people and luggage trying to get safely in and out of the hotel and put the guests and the doormen at risk of getting injured. That's why its so important for you to not allow this project to become a hotel.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Khalid Zidouh". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Michael Sinatra

BPDA

1 City Hall, 9th Floor

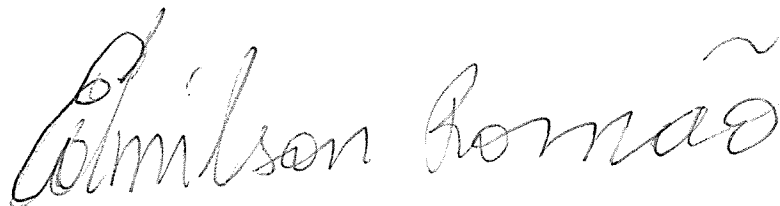
Boston, MA 02201

Re: 15 Congress Street Hotel

Dear Project Manager Sinatra,

I am writing to you today to let you know about my opposition to the proposed hotel at 15 Congress Street. My name is Edmilson Romao and I am a doorman and Boston resident. The hotel project will take up Quaker Lane for its drop off. This will cause increased traffic back-ups onto Devonshire Street and confused hotel guests will end up dropping off on Congress Street. I worry that this will be a safety hazard to doormen like me and visitors to our city. Congress Street is busy and has all kinds of traffic. Safety should be our number one priority and I don't see that in this project.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edmilson Romão". The signature is written in a cursive style with a tilde (~) over the final 'o'.

Michael Sinatra
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Dear Michael Sinatra,

My name is Richard Aliferis and I am writing to you as a long-time Beacon Hill resident and doorman at the Omni Parker House. I want to let you know that I am opposed to the proposed hotel at 15 Congress Street.

My experience as a doorman has shown me how to stay safe and manage traffic while assisting visitors to our city. The proposed hotel at 15 Congress Street is at the corner of Quaker Lane and Congress Street. The developer wants to put the pick-up and drop-off area right on Quaker Lane, blocking the road. I can also see visitors to the hotel blocking Congress Street because the route to Quaker Lane from Devonshire Street is very complicated. I can't see this proposal working out without increased traffic and a safety risk to hotel employees and hotel guests.

Thank you for taking my thoughts into consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Aliferis". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Richard Aliferis".

Michael Sinatra
Project Manager
BPDA
1 City Hall, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Michael Sinatra,

My name is Nick Panagakos and have been a doorman at the Ames Hotel on Court Street in Boston. I am writing to you regarding the 15 Congress Street hotel project. I am opposed to this project and I don't think that the BPDA should approve it. The proposed hotel has its guest loading area directly on Quaker Lane.

Now, I know a few things about working at a hotel without a driveway – the Ames doesn't have one. However, unlike the Congress Street hotel, the Ames has its drop off right on the main street. It's difficult enough without a driveway, but the confusion of having the drop off on Quaker Lane would be too much. I can't imagine how much more difficult it would be to try to do my job in that confusion.

That's why I am asking the BPDA to not approve this project until these safety issues are worked out.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Panagakos

Michael Sinatra

BPDA

1 City Hall, Boston, MA 02108

Dear Michael Sinatra,

My name is Juan Eusebio and I am writing to you about the proposed hotel at 15 Congress Street. As a longtime doorman at the W Hotel, I am opposed to this project. I feel that the hotel's choice of Quaker Lane for a drop off site is too small and would lead to traffic backing up onto Devonshire Street. I also believe that because the front of the hotel is on Congress Street, many visitors and guests will end up trying to unload there. This will result in an unsafe situation on a particularly narrow stretch of Congress Street. Hotel doormen and other employees would be spending effort to both re-direct guests in a confusing network of streets and make sure that everyone remains safe. For these reasons, I am asking the project to not be approved.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Juan Eusebio", written in a cursive style.

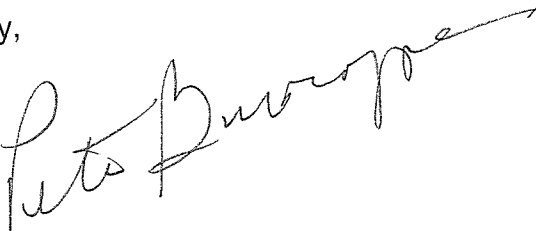
Mr. Michael Sinatra
Boston Planning and Development Agency
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Mr. Sinatra,

My name is Peter Buonopane and I am writing to oppose the 15 Congress Street hotel. Congress Street is a busy street. While the pick up and drop off for this proposed hotel may be on Quaker Lane, as a doorman here in Boston I know that Uber and Lyfts will just drop off on Congress Street. While this is not what anyone wants, it is what will happen. This puts people in my profession, in addition to people driving and biking, in a bad position.

This project was originally residential. I think the city should keep it that way and allow for hotels on streets that can accommodate them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Buonopane". The signature is written in a cursive style and is slanted upwards to the right.



ED FLYNN
BOSTON CITY COUNCILOR
DISTRICT 2

March 4th, 2019

Mr. Michael Sinatra
Boston Planning and Development Agency,
Boston City Hall
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mr. Sinatra,

I am writing to encourage the developer of the proposed hotel at 15 Congress Street to work with our Boston's doormen and bellmen to mitigate traffic at this new hotel and to help create economic opportunities and partnerships similar to those created at the Hyatt Centric next to this hotel. I cannot support a project that does not take into consideration the years of experience our city's hospitality professionals can provide as it relates to both traffic and economic development.

Congress Street is a busy main thoroughfare for many commuters. While the intention is to have pick up and drop off on Quaker Lane, we know from experience Uber, Lyft and rideshare operations will often simply drop off where they please. This is also a public safety issue. This would be devastating to those who travel down Congress Street. I encourage the developer to either keep the project as housing or work with the doormen and bellmen who attended the public meeting to find ways to mitigate this issue.

Secondly, the effects of new development on rising rents and low paying jobs still impact residents who live in Chinatown, South End and South Boston. While affordable housing is a chief concern among many residents, a good job with good benefits alleviates some of the net increases in rents we see in places like Chinatown. As the developer heard at the IAG meeting, there is a desire from neighborhood residents to make sure women, people of color and Boston residents are represented among the proposed hotel's workforce. Codifying this commitment in a formal way with the community will ensure that this project benefits Boston in a substantial way.

There is an established understanding that hotel development in Boston is one of the few opportunities to create many good, diverse jobs for those with or without a college degree. I encourage this development team to carry on this tradition and work with the Boston City Council to ensure this project helps the working people of Boston.

Edward M. Flynn

Ed Flynn, Boston City Councilor, District 2

3/4/2019.

CC: Brian Golden, Director
Jonathan Greeley, Director of Development Review



FRIENDS
OF
POST OFFICE
SQUARE

50 FEDERAL STREET
BOSTON, MA 02110

TEL: 617-423-1500
FAX: 617-423-0507

Pamela C. Messenger
direct line:

February 26, 2019

Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th floor
Boston, MA 02201
Attention: Michael Sinatra

Re: Comments and caution in support of the NPC on 15-19 Congress Street, Ward 3

Dear BPDA Members:

As a member of the Impact Advisory Group for the review of Related Beal's Expanded Project Notification Form for Congress Square, I wrote a letter in May, 2015 supporting many ideas in their proposed renovation of the former Fidelity block. The new owners of the 15-19 Congress Street portion of the project have filed a Notice of Project Change to replace 35 residential condominiums with a 116-room boutique hotel.

While we preferred the plan to bring residents to this part of the Financial District, we agree with the owner/developer that a boutique hotel will also bring an after-hours positive presence to the block. We reiterate our support of retaining the historic building facades and the distinctive fire stairs. The proposed additional floors add interest. We are pleased to see large, open windows into the hotel lobby and restaurant on the first floor along Congress Street which will open and brighten up this very imposing block.

I urge that no portion of Congress Street be used for stopping, parking, hotel/restaurant valet parking or unloading *at any time*, as this is an essential artery through the Financial District at all hours. We support the change of use to boutique hotel with a restaurant on the first floor, with clear windows to animate and activate the street well beyond the close of the business day, as this will help eliminate a dark and dreary section of the walk from Post Office Square to Faneuil Hall.

Sincerely,

Pamela C. Messenger
General Manager



Project Comment Submission: 15-19 Congress Street

1 message

kentico@boston.gov <kentico@boston.gov>

Tue, Feb 12, 2019 at 11:10 AM

To: BRAWebContent@cityofboston.gov, michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov, jeff.ng@boston.gov, comment_email_processor@o-2zlaqa64yog14nfnqlzmbbrpfox00q4is2vvlpd3irp6a8fovy.36-1heureao.na30.apex.salesforce.com

CommentsSubmissionFormID: 4972

Form inserted: 2/12/2019 11:10:39 AM

Form updated: 2/12/2019 11:10:39 AM

Document Name: [15-19 Congress Street](#)

Document Name Path: /Development/Development Projects/[15-19 Congress Street](#)

Origin Page Url: /projects/development-projects/15-19-congress-street?utm_source=Neighborhoods&utm_campaign=9b44c5d63a-15-19_Congress_St_IAG_Meeting_2_12_2019&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_bccda74844-9b44c5d63a-274785941&mc_cid=9b44c5d63a&mc_eid=072eb20c6b

First Name: Patrick

Last Name: Higgins

Organization:

Email:

Street Address: [18 Romsey St](#)

Address Line 2: Apt 2

City: Dorchester

State: MA

Phone:

Zip: 02125

Opinion: Oppose

Comments: I understand the need for the property owner/developer to make money, but Boston also has a housing crisis. There are plenty of hotels in Boston. How is it that a developer planned for 35 condos and suddenly decided that instead they will add 116 hotel rooms? I'm willing to bet they planned on this being a hotel all along.

PMContact: michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Project ID: 3253