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October 24, 2013

John FitzGerald, Project Manager  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Re: Comments on Expanded Project Notification Form for the Redevelopment of the former Boston Garden Site

Dear Mr. FitzGerald:

We are submitting our comments regarding the above Project proposed by Delaware North Companies and Boston Properties. Our comments are made as neighborhood Impact Advisory Group (IAG) members and are based on review of the Expanded Project Notification Form (ENF) dated September 6, 2013. The comments are also based on our participation in subsequent Impact Advisory Group and community meetings.

Linda has lived at Hawthorne Place in the West End for over 40 years. She has served as a trustee of the Hawthorne Place Condominium for over 20 years. During this period, Linda has been involved in forming the West End Council and has also served as a Director of Downtown North Association. She has been an active participant in community affairs and served on the Impact Advisory Groups for the Emerson Place Project, the Charles Street Jail/Liberty Hotel Project, the proposed Equity project for the Garden Garage, and now this Boston Garden Delaware North/Boston Properties Project.

Kathleen is a 30-year resident of Hawthorne Place in the West End, a community of several thousand homes, many successful businesses, and a major academic teaching hospital. She is a long-time community activist, a founding member of the West End Council, a founding member of the Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Relations Committee, and a former Hawthorne Place trustee. Kathleen has also served on the Impact Advisory Groups for many neighborhood developments, including the Charles River Plaza Redevelopment Project, the proposed Equity Garden Garage project, and the Nashua Street Residences. As a Massachusetts General Hospital employee, Kathleen truly "lives, works, and plays" in her neighborhood.

Both Kathleen and Linda have also been active participants in the Government Center Garage proposed project, the Massachusetts General Hospital Institutional Master Plan (IMP), and the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary Proposed Project. They actively participated with other neighborhood leaders and stakeholders and the City of Boston to secure funding for Thoreau Path's redevelopment. They are currently working with the City on repairs and enhancements to Blossom Street and have obtained a \$1 million commitment to complete this project next year.

The timetable for the Boston Garden project's public process has been so accelerated as to preclude more thoughtful and meaningful input by the neighborhood abutters. This has happened in conjunction with accelerated timetables for other large neighborhood proposed projects, including the massive Government Center Garage project. Having said that, we heartily welcome the development of this site and agree that the development team has worked diligently and professionally at all times to hear and respond to neighborhood concerns. We believe they truly wish to build a vibrant, creative and attractive

destination that will ultimately benefit everyone. Both of us have previously worked on other West End projects with many of the parties involved, and they have put their considerable expertise and knowledge of our neighborhood and its concerns to good use in this proposal. We are excited about the many positive benefits this redevelopment can bring to our neighborhood, particularly in Phase I. However we also have a number of serious concerns:

## **PHASE I**

No surprise, we love Phase I of this large, mixed use, transit oriented development and are in full support of the podium structure designed to reflect the surrounding neighborhood buildings. We particularly love the supermarket space. We have no objection to the tax breaks for this phase in order to attract appropriate retail uses, but those tax breaks should not be granted unless the benefits to West End residents are substantial, clearly articulated, and guaranteed. Of most concern is the fact that the EPNF only implies that there **MAY** be a supermarket. If there is no affordable supermarket, there should be no tax break. The fact that tax revenues will be greater with site development vs. no development does not mean much when one considers the tremendous increase in infrastructure use that will need to be maintained with those tax revenues.

## **PROJECT HEIGHT AND MASSING**

Current zoning in the project area caps height at 400 feet and floor area ratio (FAR) at 11. The Phase I hotel tower, at 325 feet, is a welcome addition to the planned podium of retail and office loft space. The Phase II proposed office tower, while too tall at 400 feet, complies with current zoning and is similar in height to the highest existing buildings in the West End. Thus, we would support its build-out.

However, the Phase II proposed residential tower on the west portion of the parcel is 600 feet high, not including mechanicals, thus exceeding the current zoning cap by more than 50 percent! It is far too tall for the area. It is interesting that the developer in the EPNF emphasizes how this project connects a missing link in the West End at a scale that fits the area. Nonetheless, Phase II, with its towers, does not blend into and connect with the surrounding neighborhoods at all; rather, as the developers themselves say, it makes a bold statement of its own by its very height and mass. These tall towers introduce heights more consistent with the financial district. We do not share the view, notwithstanding the many tall buildings being proposed in or near the West End, that it is appropriate to extend the financial district spine into this area.

Finally, the EPNF says that the project as a whole will exceed not only the height cap, but also the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) cap of 11. It is difficult for us to understand how density, as measured by FAR, is reduced when it will exceed the cap, that is unless the original proposal's FAR was very much out of line. Additional effort on the part of the developer to mitigate height and massing definitely is in order. We would find a residential tower of no more than 400 feet, with a corresponding reduction in number of units, to be more reasonable.

## **TRAFFIC**

The Boston Garden developers have done homework with respect to traffic issues. The new entrance/exit to Causeway Street on the Legends Way side of the site will be helpful in distributing the traffic impacts, particularly during Garden events. We are less confident that traffic impacts have been sufficiently studied in the larger context of this development along with other adjacent proposed developments. Traffic in the area of the project is already unacceptable. Both the construction impacts of all developments over the next several years and the long-term traffic generated by all of these completed developments needs to be further studied. A major coordination by the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) is essential.

## **PARKING**

We have both been actively involved in reviewing the Government Center Garage proposal, a project similar in scope, massing and density to the Boston Garden project. Both are transit-oriented development proposals located on top of or adjacent to all transportation modes. It is interesting to note that the Government Center Garage developer is proposing to actually **REDUCE** their parking by 50% based on their analysis of use of public transit and bicycles. It is further of interest that, right next door to the Boston Garden, the Lovejoy Wharf developers are constructing a residential building with a proposal for **NO** onsite parking. In contrast, the proposal for the Boston Garden project calls for construction of 800 spaces in addition to the 1,275 spaces already existing! We do not see adequate justification for this number of parking spaces on the site of one of two major transportation terminals in the region. The area is already so well served by public transit. Further, current zoning does not provide for off-street non-residential parking, and the Boston Garden developers are seeking only a .4 per-residential-unit parking requirement. Why then, is there the need for so much additional parking? This will only exacerbate an already impossible traffic situation.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPONENT**

"It's surely time to realize that the lack of affordable housing is a profound threat to the ecosystem of the city itself. You simply cannot run a place like...(Boston) without working-class people. There's fewer and fewer places for working-class people to live...These people, increasingly, are falling off the shaky ladder of economic viability, and many are being pushed into homelessness." (From The Atlantic Cities: The Grim Math of the Working-Class Housing Crisis)

As required of all new proposed developments, 15% of residential units must be set aside as affordable housing. However, that housing does not need to be on site. We both agree that we want to see this requirement filled onsite.

## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS/MITIGATION**

We certainly acknowledge and are excited by the prospect of a new and vibrant development that will complement and enhance our neighborhood. It is wonderful to hear a sincere developer tell us they are going to make their project one that will provide residents and visitors alike a viable, safe, clean and inviting destination. It could well help reinforce the sense of place that makes the West End such a special and unique neighborhood. The new and enhanced entertainment uses will provide a lively 24/7 venue for both new and current residents to meet and socialize. It will also provide retail uses and services that further revitalize the local streetscape.

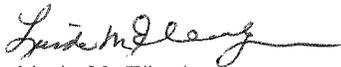
Since there will be so much more activity both within and beyond the project's perimeter, the developer should be aware and also want to provide the same safe, clean and inviting environment in the surrounding neighborhood streets and pathways, including our Thoreau Path. In particular, much as they have done in their Prudential neighborhood, the developer should ensure that improved, attractive streets, sidewalks, lighting, plantings, banners, and other similar enhancements should greet those walking, driving, cycling or otherwise travelling to and from the Boston Garden project. This would require substantial funding and programming by the developer along the lines of what is spent each year in the Back Bay by the Prudential Center. As Brian Koop of Boston Properties recently told us, the West End deserves these amenities. We hope that, in concert with the City, Boston Properties and Delaware North will agree to this ongoing long-term mitigation in return for our support of their project.

Other community benefits that are important to the West End neighborhood:

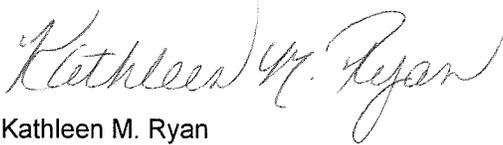
- The previously-stated desire that the affordable supermarket become reality in return for tax breaks in Phase I.
- Neighbors living to the west of the project should have a west entrance to the supermarket.
- As with the supermarket, retailers, cinemas, restaurants, etc. should be affordable.
- The neon signage should be reduced in size so it is less obtrusive.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Expanded Project Notification Form for the Boston Garden Project. We have been pleased with our ability to comment publicly to a receptive development team during our many, sometimes endless, recent meetings. Hopefully this spirit of cooperation will continue as the Article 80 process moves forward. We all want to work together so that we can point to the Boston Garden project proudly as a great joint developer, city and community project.

Sincerely,



Linda M. Ellenbogen  
West End Council Member  
Hawthorne Place Trustee



Kathleen M. Ryan  
West End Council Member

CC: Peter Meade, Executive Director, Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Nicole Leo, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services  
Michael Ross, City Councilor  
Sal LaMattina, City Councilor  
Jay Livingstone, State Representative  
Robert O'Brien, Downtown North  
Hawthorne Place Board of Trustees  
Whittier Place Board of Trustees  
West End Civic Association