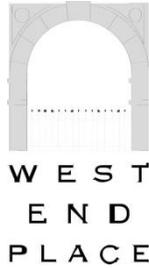


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Representing a 183 unit condominium with both market-rate and affordable apartments, located only one-half block from the proposed Boston Garden Project at 80 Causeway Street, we wish to comment on the project from the perspective of individuals and families of West End Place and the surrounding neighborhood. We enthusiastically support the project as it will fill in a vacant central site and bring to the area a vibrant, mixed use development that promises to become the rejuvenated focal point of urban activity and a dramatic enhancement for the neighborhood known as Boston's West End. We applaud the developers, Boston Properties Limited Partnership and Boston Garden Development Corporation, and their partners for a dynamic, imaginative plan for Boston Garden, as described in the Extended Project Notification Plan (EPNF).

This letter focuses on the impacts of the project that offer the opportunity to multiply the considerable benefits for the public, most especially with respect to the quality of life in the West End. Our comments are addressed to the challenge of balancing a transformative business and entertainment area with an urban residential neighborhood. While the project offers countless benefits – new retail activity including a supermarket, dynamic entertainment opportunities, new apartment dwellers and hotel guests, and expanded public transportation facilities – the project should be expected to transcend its physical footprint and immediate surroundings to embrace more extensively and substantively the community in which it will live.

The following are the primary areas of impact in which we see extraordinary opportunity to achieve greater impact for everyone with important results for the West End in particular. We urge the Boston Redevelopment Authority in collaboration with the developers to consider these propositions as beneficial additions to an already commendable project plan.

1. Functional and harmonious pedestrian traffic flow. Traffic and transportation include both vehicles and pedestrians. Regarding vehicles, those of us who live in the West End know the impacted conditions that occur at various times including rush hours and most particularly before and after events. We are pleased that the developers have focused a major portion of the EPNF on vehicular traffic management and we applaud the solutions proposed therein.

Regarding pedestrians and pedestrian flow, we feel there is more to be studied and executed. We have proposed addressing pedestrian flow as an overall, thematic concept, *West End Pathways*, which we would advance here for your consideration. Re-imagined as pathways for walkers, the West End is an urban laboratory that can become a national model. It is a contained area filled with networked paths, both existing and planned, with connections to manifold destinations. Pedestrians take their routes on sidewalks and alleyways but also along the river, across the locks of a dam, underneath a bridge, above railroad tracks, through arcades and arches, between

buildings, across a dock, and over park paths – sometimes crossing the fewest streets possible. By considering the West End as *West End Pathways*, it becomes possible to transform the neighborhood for the future where the automobile is not king but pedestrians are. As a component of the Boston Garden Project, we advocate the inclusion of a Pedestrian Pathway Plan Agreement in conjunction with the Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA) mentioned in the EPNF. A comprehensive study of pedestrian traffic along with vehicular traffic would produce an urban mobility plan maximizing the pedestrian zone, the methods to fund it, the agencies to be engaged, and the means of execution. The plan would embrace the entire West End area and be scalable for the future. Ideally, it would be executed concurrently with project construction and completion.

2. Complete streets and sidewalks. According to experts, streets and sidewalks constitute the majority of open space in the city. Here in the West End, Causeway Street appears headed toward significant improvement along with abutting areas due to the project itself and the City's Crossroads Initiative. It is our hope that this kind of improvement will be expanded to the larger district or neighborhood, raised to a higher level of attainment, and accompanied by the means to sustain it. The bar is about to be raised for urban landscapes and the West End is a prime candidate for implementing area wide the standards of *Boston Complete Streets* as described in the just released guidelines (www.bostoncompletestreets.org). We suggest that the concept of complete streets, backed by the BRA and the Boston Garden developers, contains the vision and the methodology for a transformation of stellar proportion. The concept embraces all the elements: extended curbs and raised street crossings, street trees and furniture, multi-modal intersections and pedestrian signal timing, cycle tracks and transit lanes, pervious pavers and storm water management, mobility hubs, signage and art, lighting, and parklets.

To do this, the West End already has a model established a decade ago, the Bulfinch Triangle Streetscape Improvement Program. The BTSIP, with funds generated from the Democratic National Convention and awarded by the BRA, the Downtown North Association planned and implemented a five-year improvement program with the management assistance of Community Work Services on Portland Street. Services included daily sidewalk cleaning, the design and installation of streetlight banners, and seasonal flower planting in hanging baskets and median strip containers. This program could be revitalized, expanded in its services, and enlarged geographically. With an initial financial investment and the leadership of the business establishment including the owners of the project property, the West End could implement the complete streets concept including an ongoing, self-sustaining program for cleaning and maintenance. A non-profit organization could be established, like the successful business investment districts in so many other cities and most recently in Boston, in order to plan and manage the program. We have a rare window of opportunity, prompted by the Boston Garden Project, to implement the concept of complete streets throughout the West End, perhaps more thoroughly and successfully than any neighborhood in Boston.

3. Affordable housing. West End Place, with 18 families who fled the demolition of the old West End and 82 individuals or families (out of 183) with low to moderate income (45%), is a mixed community of unusual proportions demonstrating that success in creating affordable housing can be achieved by determined private and public partners at the local, state, and federal levels. Given Boston's rising home prices and rents coupled with stagnant or declining household income, we urge the Garden Project not only to meet the standard level of 15% affordable housing but to do so on-site. This is imperative because the West End is becoming less and less affordable, losing its moderate and even middle income population to the affluent who can afford the rents. Only a few weeks ago, the Boston Foundation's *Greater Boston Housing Report Card for 2013* documented the above condition and called for "continued increases in multifamily housing production" as a top priority. Ideally, the Boston Garden Project would exceed the 15% level as exemplar of the axiom, "to whom much is given much is

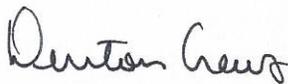
expected," especially in a neighborhood like the West End with its historic character as an affordable neighborhood for people of moderate income and families with children. But if the Boston Garden Project should be justifiably impeded in meeting the affordable housing standard, we recommend the dedication of linkage funding for affordable housing in the West End rather more remote neighborhoods. At West End Place, we believe there are opportunities to achieve this outcome and more in our neighborhood and enthusiastically offer our readiness to assist. Doing this will enrich the project, the neighborhood, and the city.

4. Community organizations. As in the old West End there were numerous community centers and social organizations contributing to the fabric of urban life (such as settlement houses, service organizations, and clubs according to Herbert Gans in *The Urban Villagers*), in the new West End there are deserving organizations that enrich the quality of life for all. We recommend that the Boston Garden Project invest in these organizations in a way that enables them to achieve operational effectiveness and financial self-sufficiency over a multi-year period. Business leaders associated with the project can contribute enormously to the operational effectiveness of the organizations, and the property owners can provide investment funding dedicated to returns-on-investment similar to some extent to those in the world of venture capital. The following projects are recommended for the consideration of the developers and the BRA:

- **West End Museum.** Envisioned from the start and inspired by leaders from the former West End, the museum was formally launched after the opening of West End Place in 1997. Over fifteen years, the museum has built a collection and attracted patrons. Nevertheless, there remains a need to establish a stable revenue stream and sustainable programs and services. With an investment in the operations to bring on a small staff for a period of three years, the museum should be able to prosper and survive.
- **West End Community Center.** The community center has recently acquired temporary space for its programs but needs a long term location for its office and services. With program plans for all ages and throughout the year, the provision of space for the future of the center will enable the staff to focus on expanded programming, membership development, and supplementary fund raising.
- **Friends of Thoreau Path.** It is the goal of the Friends of Thoreau Path to apply contributed funding to direct investment in park and path improvements. Owners of properties and abutters will be expected to assume responsibility for ongoing maintenance costs. The Friends will provide overall planning and oversight for standards and rules, maintenance coordination, fund raising, and park services, programs, and amenities.

The Garden Project has the potential to become Boston's North Star. It is the largest entertainment complex in New England and its transformation can have a celestial impact. But the area is also a neighborhood of people who live there days, nights, and weekends. The project can be more truly an urban success by expanding its inclusiveness to the whole community and ensuring that everyone will enjoy what John Ruskin called the pride of place.

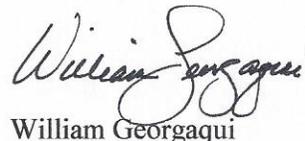
Sincerely,



Denton Crews



Jane Forrestall



William Georganaki