



May 19, 2015

BY HAND

Mr. Brian Golden, Director
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Subject: Congress Square – Project Update

Dear Mr. Golden:

We are writing this letter to provide you an update on Congress Square (the Project) proposed by Related Beal, LLC (the Proponent) on behalf of its affiliate, RFM Block on Congress I, LLC. The Project site is located north of Post Office Square in the block bound by the buildings at 46 Devonshire Street and 31 State Street to the north, Congress Street to the east, Water Street to the south, and Devonshire Street to the west. The site currently consists of six existing buildings at 40 Water Street, 82 Devonshire Street, 68 Devonshire Street, 33-35 Congress Street, 15 Congress Street, and 19 Congress Street, all of which are dedicated entirely to office use. The site also includes the vacant lot at 54 Devonshire Street that is currently dedicated to surface parking. Between the buildings is Quaker Lane, which is used as a service way.

Project History

The Proponent filed a Letter of Intent on October 31, 2014, followed by an Expanded Project Notification Form (PNF) on March 25, 2015. After submission of the Expanded PNF, a Scoping Session at the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) was held on April 13, 2015, followed by an Impact Advisory Group (IAG) meeting on the same day. A community meeting was held on May 11, 2015. We note that during the meetings following the submission of the Expanded PNF, the Project team described the possible changes to the Project as described herein.

Expanded PNF Project

The Project, as proposed in the Expanded PNF, included the renovation of the existing office buildings to a mix of uses, including office, retail/restaurant, hotel and residential space. The Project has combined the parcels into three components:

40 Water Street includes the buildings of 40 Water Street, 82 Devonshire Street and 33-35 Congress Street.

68 Devonshire Street includes the existing 68 Devonshire Street building and the new addition to be constructed on the vacant lot located at 54 Devonshire Street.

15 Congress Street includes the existing 15 Congress Street and 19 Congress Street buildings, as well as a five-story addition to 15 Congress Street.

The Project included approximately 458,300 square feet, of which approximately 92,700 square feet would be new construction.

Project Changes

The Project has been presented as a unified development in order to allow for the most comprehensive review of the Project, including its possible impacts, when taken as a whole; however, the components will likely be held in separate ownership. As such, the Proponent has been in discussions with interested parties for the development and tenancy of the Project components. These discussions have resulted in changes to the Project, including:

- The hotel proposed for 68 Devonshire Street will include approximately 190 hotel keys, instead of the proposed 133 keys, although the gross floor area will remain the same; and
- The addition to 40 Water Street is proposed to be six (6) stories instead of the proposed three (3) stories, increasing the floor area from approximately 315,500 square feet to approximately 388,000 square feet.

The remainder of the proposed Project, including its proposed improvements to Quaker Lane and public benefits, will not change.

Summary of Environmental Impacts

As required by the BRA, the Expanded PNF included technical analyses of environmental impacts where appropriate (including transportation, shadow, air quality, and infrastructure), as well as qualitative discussions of other impacts (including wind, daylight, noise, etc.). The anticipated impacts related to the changes to the Project are as follows.

Transportation: The changes to the Project will result in 774 additional daily pedestrian/bicycle trips (387 entering and 387 exiting), 476 additional daily transit trips (238 entering and 238 exiting) and 256 additional daily automobile trips (128 entering and 128 exiting). During the weekday morning peak hour, the changes to the Project will result in 67 additional pedestrian/bicycle trips (50 entering and 17 exiting), 57 additional transit trips (46 entering and 11 exiting) and 27 additional automobile trips (23 additional entering and 4 additional exiting). During the weekday evening peak hour, the changes to the Project will result in 69 additional pedestrian/bicycle trips (24 entering and 45 exiting), 55 additional transit trips (14 entering and 41 exiting) and 29 additional automobile trips (7 entering and 22 exiting). As noted, during peak hours of commuter traffic, the changes to the Project are projected to result in less than one (1) additional automobile trip every other minute.

Wind: The building envelopes will remain the same, with the exception of the three (3) additional levels proposed on 40 Water Street. However, the height of 40 Water Street will continue to be similar or less than the heights of surrounding buildings, and be set back from the façade of the existing building, and therefore, impacts to pedestrian level winds are not anticipated.

Shadow: The additional levels to 40 Water Street will result in small increases to net new shadow from the Project. However, as shown in the Expanded PNF, the Project is anticipated to create minimal new pedestrian level shadows, and no new shadow will be cast onto nearby open spaces.

Daylight: Although the three (3) new levels on 40 Water Street will increase daylight obstruction values, the obstruction values will still be similar or less than the surrounding area which includes buildings that are significantly taller than the proposed Project.

Solar Glare: The Project is not anticipated to include highly reflective glass that would create significant solar glare impacts.

Air Quality: Although the number of vehicle trips will increase, impacts to air quality are anticipated to be similar to those described in the Expanded PNF.

Noise: Noise impacts are anticipated to be similar to those described in the Expanded PNF.

Construction: The Construction Management Plan in compliance with the City's Construction Management Program will be submitted to the Boston Transportation Department, and provide information on construction impacts and mitigation.

Sustainable Design: The design team will continue to work with the BRA to improve the building performance with the new addition. The three (3) new levels create additional opportunities to improve the thermal performance, achieve daylighting and views for the interior office spaces, and increase the energy efficiency of the building.

Climate Change: The Project will continue to incorporate measures to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and be resilient towards climate change impacts as described in the Expanded PNF.

Urban Design: At the street level, the addition is mostly hidden from view due to the existing skyscrapers surrounding the site, and is never completely visible in its entirety. From the primary urban view corridor, the southern approach from Pearl Street, a corner of the new addition will be visible. The Project acknowledges this long view with a dynamic design at the intersection of Congress Street and Water Street. A series of elevated terraces wrap the Congress Street and Water Street facades, visually extending Post Office Square Park up around the building. Particular attention will be paid to the curtain wall which is designed to be slightly faceted, creating subtle variations in light, reflections and texture across the new façade.

Historic Resources: The updated Project design will increase the visibility of the addition when looking from the south. In the background, the Devonshire (1 Devonshire Place) and 28 State Street will rise above the proposed addition. The visibility from the north will be partially concealed by buildings in the foreground and the addition will be seen against the McCormack Federal Building. The design takes into account the sight lines, and thus includes setbacks at the southeast corner of 40 Water Street. Preliminary shadow studies indicate that no impacts are expected to the facades of historic buildings. Minimal additional shadows may occur at the rear elevations of 7-9 Congress Street and 13-15 Congress Street.

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Infrastructure: The changes to the Project will result in a net new increase in wastewater generation from approximately 18,788 gpd to approximately 36,426, and an increase in net new water use from approximately 20,656 gpd to approximately 40,069 gpd. The Project will continue to incorporate water conservation measures to decrease water use, and therefore, wastewater generation. The Project's stormwater impacts are anticipated to be similar to those described in the Expanded PNF.

Conclusion

As described above, the changes to the Project will have few additional impacts than what was described in the Expanded PNF, while continuing to provide a number of benefits, including new tax revenue, new construction and permanent jobs, new residences, affordable housing units, and a reinvigorated Quaker Lane that will bring new activity and vitality to this area of downtown Boston.

We look forward to continuing to work with the BRA and City as this Project moves forward.

Sincerely,



Peter A. Spellios
Executive Vice President