

December 16, 2019

Aisling Kerr
Project Manager, Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

RE: Common Allbright -- 525 Lincoln Street

Dear Aisling:

The Impact Advisory Group (“IAG”) thanks ArxUrban and Boylston Properties (collectively, “the Proponents”) for their engagement during the Article 80 Large Project Review Process for Common Allbright -- 525 Lincoln Street (as proposed, the “Project”).

Following a careful review of the Project proposal, including the Expanded Project Notification Form and associated materials presented and discussed at the July 30 IAG Meeting, August 6 Public Meeting, September 9 IAG meeting, and December 4 IAG meeting, the IAG supports the project as currently proposed. Below, we outline our rationale for our support, contingent on the BPDA and Proponents’ accurate recording of the agreed-upon community benefits in the Article 80 Cooperation Agreement.

Housing Affordability

We appreciate the Proponents’ commitment to housing affordability in the form of a unique co-living apartment building. After significant deliberation with the Proponents, we support the following housing mix and parameters:

- 20 percent of units set aside under the City of Boston’s Inclusionary Development Program (“IDP”):
 - Studios -- 2 at 70% AMI and 2 at 100% AMI.
 - Co-living suites (4 bedrooms each) -- 9 at 70% AMI and 3 at 100% AMI.
- No broker’s fee will be charged. Monthly rent will include all utilities and other associated building amenities, including internet, laundry, and furnished living spaces.
- Undergraduate students will not be permitted to lease in the building.
- The minimum lease term will be 12 months. No short-term rentals (e.g., AirBnB) will be permitted. The Project will have up to 8 on-site staff, who will monitor the building closely to ensure no units are rented out on a short-term basis.

Alternative Transportation and Parking Management

We also support the Proponents’ approach to transportation demand management and alternative forms of transportation. Specifically, we appreciate that the Proponents aim to incentivize car-free or car-lite lifestyles for residents of the Project by pledging to take the following steps:

- Unbundling parking costs from rent costs and charging market rate for off-street parking.

- Mandating that any residents who live in the building and own a car must purchase onsite parking. Residents are prohibited from obtaining a City of Boston Resident Parking sticker (lease provision).
- Sponsoring a BlueBikes station on-site.
- Providing “TransitWallets” to all residents which provide a \$20 monthly subsidy for MBTA passes, BlueBike memberships, or car-share rentals.
- Providing covered bicycle storage at a 1 to 1 ratio with SROs.
- Providing on-site shared electric vehicles for use by residents, as well as car-share spaces.
- Committing to reassess off-street parking utilization 18 months after building opening. If parking supply exceeds parking demand, the Proponents will reclaim unused parking spaces for community use.
- Providing 16 surface parking spaces across the street from the Project, designated for visitors. Depending on demand, the Proponents may permit local community members to pay to rent a space in the surface lot.
- Contributing \$10,000 to the BPDA Allston-Brighton Mobility Study.

Streetscape Improvements / Green Space / Building Design

We appreciate the Proponents’ commitment to complying with Boston’s Complete Streets Guidelines and making significant upgrades to the current streetscape along the Project site. We also appreciate the Proponents’ commitment to expanding and maintaining green space on the Project site. These upgrades and commitments include:

- Widened sidewalks to significantly increase widths along Lincoln Street.
- Installation of a new crosswalk (pending design review and approval from the City of Boston Transportation Department) and curb bump-out at the intersection of Lincoln Street and Empire Street.
- Planting of street trees and greenery along Lincoln and Cambridge Streets, as well as street activation along Cambridge Street, with a second building entrance and renewed sidewalk.
- Artist mural display along the Lincoln Street side of the building, ideally that visually incorporates the existing street art on Lincoln Street.
- Financial / logistical commitment to reinvigorate and maintain the Lincoln Street Green Strip in conjunction with the Friends of the Lincoln Street Green Strip (“LSGS”) and Allston Brighton CDC.
 - Application for CPA funds to be prepared by the Proponents.
 - Design, construction, and maintenance of the LSGS will be implemented in collaboration with the Friends of Lincoln Street Green Strip and Allston/Brighton CDC.
- Addition of a 4500 sq ft green courtyard for public use fronting Lincoln Street.

Community Space / Benefits

The Proponents have committed to the following community benefits:

- 1,250 sq. ft. of ground floor flexible community space to be provided to the community at no charge, managed by the Project’s operator, Common.
 - Open to all community members, not only residents at the Project. Potential opportunity for expansion if off-street parking utilization does not meet supply (*see* “Alternative Transportation and Parking Management”).

- \$5,000 contribution to the Boston Parks & Recreation specifically for Lower Allston / North Brighton park improvements.

To conclude, we appreciate the Proponents' thoughtful approach to the Project, and believe it will fill a much-needed gap in housing demand in Allston. As a result, we support the Project.

Sincerely,

Common Allbright IAG

Christine Varriale

Sam Burgess

Jane McHale

Jordan Meehan

Chelsea Green

Carol Ridge Martinez

CC:

Conor Newman, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

Kevin G. Honan, State Representative, 17th Suffolk

Mark Ciommo, Boston City Councilor, District 9

Liz Breadon, Boston City Councilor Elect, District 9

Michael J. Moran, State Representative, 18th Suffolk