

July 28, 2006

Mr. Jeffrey Lin
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: The 100 Acres Master Plan, South Boston Groundwater Trust

Dear Mr. Lin:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed master plan for the 100 Acres area. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in areas of the City where building foundations are threatened by lowered groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. As such, my comments are restricted to groundwater related issues.

While the area included in the Master Plan is outside the recently adopted Groundwater Conservation Overlay District, many of the existing buildings, especially in Zone 1, along with virtually all of the other original Boston Wharf Company buildings, are supported on wood pilings. The Fort Point Channel neighborhood is one of the study areas intended for potential future expansion of the GCOD. As such, it is important that groundwater issues be carefully considered as construction is planned in the area.

The Master Plan phase is, of course, too early to comment on specific building plans and foundation designs. However, it is not too soon to suggest that there be a requirement that building designs be such that they cannot have a negative impact on nearby groundwater levels, for example by insuring that below water table basements be built watertight and that buildings be constructed without underdrains. Recharge of rainwater should be included as much as possible. In addition, it might be useful to add groundwater monitoring wells in areas where construction is near existing wood pile supported buildings and there aren't enough BGwT network observation wells in the immediate area.

As projects develop, I look forward to working with the proponents and the Authority to be sure that they will help us to keep groundwater at levels that will help to preserve the historic buildings in the area.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Maura Zlody, BED