

April 3, 2006

Mr. Mark McGowan, Project Manager  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: 285 Columbus Avenue

Dear Mr. McGowan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Project Notification Form for 285 Columbus Avenue. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the City where building foundations are threatened by lower groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. As such, our comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

This project is located within the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District. I was pleased with the commitments from the proponent offered during the scoping session to meet the requirements of the GCOD. I recognize that the building's full use of its site makes finding a good location for a recharge system a challenge. I was heartened by the willingness of the proponent to consider a system under the Columbus Avenue sidewalk and of DPW to consider that positively in the absence of better alternatives. The Boston Groundwater Trust currently has an observation well located in this stretch of sidewalk; we would ask that the project be required to replace it with a well installed to our specifications if construction of the recharge system or reconstruction of the sidewalk causes it to be damaged or destroyed.

The GCOD also requires that the proponent show that the project will not cause a reduction groundwater levels either on the site or on abutting sites. Since this is a rehabilitation project, it will be important to show that the existing basement does not leak, and that there will be no provisions for pumping groundwater from the site.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that the project can only have a positive effect on groundwater levels in the area.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer  
Executive Director

Cc: John Walser, BRA  
Maura Zlody, BED