

Boston Groundwater Trust

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Elliott Laffer

Sonal Gandhi, Senior Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Brigham and Women's Hospital

Dear Ms. Gandhi:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Institutional Master Plan Notification Form/Project Notification Form for Brigham and Women's Hospital. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of Boston where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by low groundwater levels and to recommend solutions to the problem. Therefore, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

As noted in the section of the document devoted to Stormwater Management, the proposed project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District. This fact should be noted in the zoning analysis for the project as well. I appreciate the proponent's commitment, as stated in the IMPNF/PNF, to meet the recharge requirements mandated in the GCOD.

The document includes a commitment to work with the City and the BGwT to reduce water table impacts during and after construction. However, the GCOD includes a mandate that the proponent demonstrate, in a document stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts, that the project will be designed so that it will have NO negative impact on groundwater levels on the site or on adjoining lots. I appreciate the proponent's commitment during the scoping session to meet this requirement. Because the project plans to include an underground parking garage, this commitment is particularly important. Since the zoning process is expected to be complete several years before detailed design begins on the project, it is important that there be a written commitment from the proponent to meet this standard before any zoning change is granted.

I appreciate as well the proponent's agreement that there will be monitoring of groundwater levels before and during construction to make sure that there is no unexpected drop in levels, as well as a commitment to work with the BGwT to determine if any additional observation wells are needed. The data should be shared with the Authority and the Trust shortly after it is taken. We look forward to working with the proponent to develop a monitoring protocol that will include stopping work if adjacent groundwater levels drop more than a specified amount. When no longer needed by the project, the wells should be turned over to the BGwT to be added to the observation well network.

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

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED