

Boston Groundwater Trust

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October 26, 2012

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

Subject: Boston Children's Hospital

Dear Ms. Gandhi:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Institutional Master Plan Notification Form and Project Notification Form for Boston Children'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 make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

As noted in the IMPNF/PNF, a portion of the Boston Children's Hospital campus is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established under Article 32 of the Zoning Code. Of the three projects described in the PNF, only the parking garage expansion is in the area covered by the GCOD. Because this is an addition of just one floor on top of the existing garage, it may not trip any of the thresholds for GCOD applicability. I am pleased that the proponent has committed, both in the IMPNF/PNF and at the scoping session, that the project will meet GCOD standards if they are applicable.

While not in the GCOD, the planned Clinical Building is only a block outside the zone and includes a very deep basement. I am pleased at the commitment in the document that the project will be designed to have no negative impact on area groundwater levels during construction and at the commitment made during the scoping session that this will apply during operation of the building as well. The proponent promised during the scoping session to describe in the Draft Project Impact Report details on how they will meet this standard. I look forward to studying that information in the DPIR.

The third project, an office and parking structure, is to be located in the Audubon Circle neighborhood. While there are wood piling supported structures in the area and some local groundwater levels are marginal, it is not part of the GCOD. The IMPNF/PNF notes that the project will include minimal below grade construction (precluded by the presence of the MBTA Green Line tunnel) and is therefore unlikely to have any negative impact on area groundwater levels.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that there will be no reductions in area groundwater levels because of these projects.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED