

# Boston Groundwater Trust

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Christian Simonelli

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Lauren Middleton-Pratt, Project Manager  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Garden Garage Notice of Project Change

Dear Ms. Middleton-Pratt:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Project Change (NPC) for the Garden Garage project. The Boston Groundwater Trust (BGwT) was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the City where the integrity of building foundations, especially those supported by wood pilings, is 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 project is not located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established under Article of the Zoning Code, it is only a short distance from the Bulfinch Triangle, an area that is within the GCOD and where existing buildings are supported on wood pilings. According to the NPC, the project will include a five level below-grade parking structure with three elevator pits. The NPC also states that the foundation design will likely be similar to that described in the DPIR. As stated in DPIR and again in the NPC, the permanent foundation walls will create a groundwater cutoff and will not present a long-term risk to the shallow groundwater table. Also stated in DPIR and again in the NPC, the lowest floor slab will have an underdrain system to relieve hydrostatic up-lift pressures in which the discharge from the underdrain system will possibly be recharged into the upper aquifer.

Precautions must be taken in the design and construction of the below grade portion of the project to make sure that it will not cause reductions in nearby groundwater levels. In addition to waterproofing the structure, foundation walls, and elevator pits these precautions should assure that no path is created that will allow groundwater to drain from the upper trapped aquifer to a lower aquifer and that any underdrains included in the design discharge through a recharge system into the upper aquifer. At the scoping session the proponent acknowledged that the structure, foundation walls, and elevator pits will be waterproofed. In addition, the proponent also acknowledged that the underdrains included in the design will discharge through a recharge system into the upper aquifer.

The proponent also acknowledged that a groundwater level monitoring program will be in place before, during and after construction to mitigate potential issues and to document groundwater levels.

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

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christian S. Simonelli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Christian Simonelli  
Executive Director

CC: Kathleen Pederson, BRA  
Maura Zlody, BED