

# Boston Groundwater Trust

229 Berkeley St, Fourth Floor, Boston, MA 02116  
617.859.8439 voice – 617.266.8750 fax  
www.bostongroundwater.org

## Board of Trustees

Gary L. Saunders  
Tim Ian Mitchell  
Co-Chairs

Galen Gilbert  
Nancy Grilk  
James W. Hunt III  
William Linehan  
Aaron Michlewitz  
William Moy  
William Onuoha  
Molly Sherden  
Peter Sherin  
Peter Shilland

## Executive Director

Elliott Laffer

January 31, 2011

Mr. Jay Rourke, Senior Project Manager  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Garden Garage

Dear Mr. Rourke:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Project Notification Form for the Garden Garage project. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the City 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.

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 there are currently some groundwater elevation low spots. According to the PNF, the garage that will extend below the two towers included in the project will have a bottom floor about 42 feet below the surface. Since, according to the document, surface elevations in the area range from about 17 to 30 feet above Boston City Base, the excavation will extend well below the elevations considered critical for the preservation of wood pile supported foundations. Precautions must be taken in the design and construction of the below grade portion of the project to make sure that it cannot cause reductions in nearby groundwater levels. In addition to waterproofing the structure, 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.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that the project cannot have a negative impact on nearby groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer  
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA  
Maura Zlody, BED