

December 8, 2006

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

Subject: Northeastern University

Dear Mr. Autler:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Northeastern University's Third Amendment to the Institutional Master Plan and Draft Project Impact Reports for Residence Halls I and K.

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 reduced groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. As such, my comments are restricted to groundwater related issues.

I want to commend the University for addressing these issues seriously in all three of the documents and for responding carefully to the comments that I offered on the IMPNF and PNF filings for these projects. It is clear from these filings as well as from its own institutional experience that Northeastern understands the difficulties that inadequately addressing groundwater issues can cause in the made lands areas of Boston. As the DPIR for Residence Hall K notes, it will be in close proximity to two major wood piling supported structures, the YMCA and Northeastern's own Matthews Arena.

Of particular note is the commitment will, in accordance with general University policy, not include any perimeter drains; these can cause groundwater to be removed from the site and generally lower levels in the area. Although not located within the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District (GCOD), Residence Hall I will include fully waterproofed below grade basement areas and a slab designed to resist hydrostatic uplift without the drains. The basement area of Residence Hall K will not extend below the water table; again the building will be designed to resist uplift without drains.

I am pleased, as well, that Residence Hall K will comply with the recharge requirements of the GCOD. This will reduce runoff from the site even though the amount of impervious area increases. Residence Hall I will also include recharge, even though the GCOD requirements do not apply.

I appreciate that the University will be monitoring existing groundwater observation wells during construction as well as adding new wells at each site that will eventually be turned over to the Trust and added to our well network. These wells should be monitored for several months prior to construction to establish baseline data and then more frequently during construction, especially when there is any dewatering being conducted. The readings should be shared with the BRA and the Trust so that we can make sure that no unusual reductions occur. Provisions should be in place to remedy any problems that are found.

I look forward to working with the University and the Authority on any groundwater related issues as these projects proceed.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Maura Zlody, BED