Shirley Kressel

Phil Cohen, Project Manager <Phil.Cohen@boston.gov>

Boston Planning & Development Agency

One City Hall Square

Boston, MA 02201

RE: 1000 Boylston Street Project Notification Form (PNF)

Dear Mr. Cohen:

I am a Back Bay resident and owner of a home at Hereford and Marlborough, a couple of blocks north of the proposed project. I am writing to you to express my opposition to the design as proposed in the 1000 Boylston Street Article 80 Project Notification Form (PNF).

The PNF asserts that the community wants this project. However, the size in height and bulk far exceeds anything we envisioned for this site, as is clear from the Civic Vision for Turnpike Air Rights prepared by the BRA and guidelines prepared by the Citizens for Reasonable Turnpike Development and the community view for this part of the Back Bay. The proposal suffers from many serious deficiencies:

**Neighborhood and state guidelines are ignored.**

No building of this size has ever been supported by the neighborhoods for Boylston Street (in the Back Bay). The Developer largely disregards the “Civic Vision for Turnpike Development” guidelines, designed to protect Back Bay and Fenway neighborhood’s historic character and livability. These were established (by consensus) after public meetings with BRA staff and urban planners. “Only one taller building above 15 stories should be allowed on either Parcel 12 or 15. No other buildings on these parcels should exceed 14 stories.” Further, the guidelines call for no visible parking, 24-foot-wide sidewalks, and some form of public benefit, such as assisted living, childcare, cultural facilities, affordable housing, etc. This proposal includes none of these.

**Serious environmental impacts will result.**

**Shadows.** This project will create unacceptable shadow on our parks and will darken many homes*.* We can expect significant new shadows throughout the year. These are indicated on the minimal shadow studies included in the PNF. In some seasons, shadows will extend across the Comm. Ave. Mall to the Esplanade and Charles River. At times these shadows will adversely affect significant areas of parks, homes, and public and historic buildings for several hours daily. We need detailed shadow studies of these impacts, which will affect quality of life and property values. Note that the PNF fails to include a shadow “overlap” diagram for Dec. 21.

**Canyonization.** The larger buildings on Boylston Street (500 and 888 Boylston) were set far back from the sidewalk edge toreduce the canyonization of the street and the shadow impact on Newbury Street and the residential neighborhood. In contrast, this project has no significant setback for either tower.

**Wind**. These towers will intensify winds in our already gusty neighborhood. We need detailed wind studies and impacts on pedestrians.

**Transportation.** Adding 342 residential units and 300 cars on this block will have significant impact. Keep in mind that our Fire Station is across the street. We need detailed studies of impact on street traffic and public transit capacity*.*

**Sustainable design.** This project meets only the third-tier quality benchmark (Silver) for LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Massachusetts ranks as a top state for sustainable, energy-efficient building. Projects here should be built to Gold or Platinum LEED standards.

**Public open space.** A small garden belonging to St. Cecilia Parish will disappear. We need a study considering a replacement park on the portion of the air rights owned by the Prudential to offset this loss.

**Design process is inadequate.**

**The proponent has not considered a more regulation-compliant, less damaging alternative.** This is not an “all-or-nothing” situation. The community would welcome a smaller development that conforms to the Civic Vision and avoids this proposal’s lasting harmful consequences to our neighborhood. We demand that an alternative smaller-scale design, requiring no public land acquisition, be evaluated before any decisions are made. Even the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs requested additional studies in their review: 1) No-Build Alternative, 2) Reduced-Build Alternative originally proposed by the Proponent in 2013, and 3) [Developer-]Preferred Alternative

**The development context must be considered as a whole.** Berklee College is about to add another tower on Mass. Ave. near Boylston Street as part of its Master Plan. And another tower is planned on air rights at Mass. Ave. across from the Hynes T stop. The four towers together would add tremendous density and shadow to the border of our neighborhood.

**The economics of the project have not been demonstrated.** The developer has not shown that a project of this scale is financially necessary to offset the costs of building over the Turnpike, although cost arguments alone would not necessarily garner support for the project.

Regarding the required Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR), we request the preparation of additional studies complete with environmental impact reports for the following alternatives:

*A design based on the Weiner Samuels submission to MassDOT in 2013, the design the CAC reviewed when recommending the Samuels Weiner team for Parcels 12 & 15. In this design, the Prudential site is undeveloped, except for a low scale building or a park.*

*A design that meets the underlying zoning (no PDA) and does not request the City to cede air rights over streets or sidewalks.*

*A design that leaves the city’s cherished public parks – the Commonwealth Avenue Mall and the Esplanade -- at least as sunny as the design in the 2013 Weiner Samuels RFP submission.*

Please protect the neighborhood fabric and do not permit the developers to ignore the design considerations embedded in the Civic Vision.

Shirley Kressel