



DATE: July 30, 2020

TO: Nupoor Monani, Senior Institutional Planner, BPDA

FROM: Gary Nicksa, Senior Vice President of Operations, Boston University *gun*

CC: Brian Golden, Director, BPDA
Mike Christopher, Deputy Director of Development Review, BPDA
Edward Carmody, Institutional Planner & Project Manager, BPDA
Jake Sullivan, Vice President for Government & Community Affairs, BU
Ken Ryan, Director of City Relations, BU

OVERVIEW

Boston University submits the following application requesting authorization to utilize the property at 540 Commonwealth Avenue (the "Site") for institutional use on a temporary basis pending review and approval of the Sixth Amendment to the 2013-2023 Charles River Campus Institutional Master Plan. An Institutional Master Plan Notification Form for this amendment, filed March 2020, sought approval to use this space for academic and administrative uses to support the University's online programs.

The property is located near to the Questrom School of Business at 595 Commonwealth Avenue and urgently needed for faculty office and video recording for the University's new online Masters in Business Administration ([Online MBA](#)) program starting September 2020.

Due to COVID-19, the University has had to de-densify its classrooms and faculty offices. This has required the conversion of over 100 spaces on campus to temporary classroom use and the University does not have appropriate space available for the Online MBA program.

OVERALL CLASSROOM AND ACADEMIC SPACE DE-DENSIFICATION

Overall De-Densification Strategy

It has remained an important goal for Boston University to develop a plan of how students might best begin or continue their academic programs and residential experiences in fall 2020. These efforts to return to a residential campus are being developed in accordance with strict public health and safety guidelines.

The framework for this approach is Learning *from* Anywhere (LfA), a mix of in-person, remote and asynchronous components to create a flexible learning experience. The new format was chosen because it can accommodate safety requirements that may be imposed by public health authorities, as well as travel challenges faced by some students. LfA provides students with the option to live on campus and be in the classroom in-person, or participate remotely from a residence hall or an off-campus home.

Safety precautions limit the number of people in any given space at one time with at least 6' spacing between classroom seats. Capacities of instruction spaces across campus are being reduced by as much as two-thirds to meet the new guidelines. This has made it necessary to add to the number of rooms used for instruction. Space that once could be used as temporary production space for online instruction has now been allocated to compensate for the de-densification strategy.

OFF-CAMPUS BUILDING/PROPERTY INFORMATION

540 Commonwealth Avenue	
Address of Building	540 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215
Current Use(s)	Classroom and office
Current Occupancy	Vacant
Current License Issued	N/A

Written Consent from Property Owner

See Exhibit A, attached.

Description of Abutting Buildings

Located in a heavily commercial area, Kenmore Square, the property is a 3 story building of 26,850sf. To the west is a two story commercial building with Santander Bank on the ground floor. To the east is a mixed used building with Ace Tickets on the first floor and residential units above.

The site is in close proximity to other University-owned property in the East Campus portion of the Charles River Campus including the Questrom School of Business, the Metcalf Science Center and a number of student residences. Given the convenience and proximity to other Business School faculty, 540 Commonwealth Avenue is an ideal location for Online MBA faculty offices and work space.

Auxiliary Spaces Within the Building

The first floor of the property has commercial uses that include Bank of America, Qdoba Mexican Grill, and McDonalds. The upper floors are served by a separate entrance to the building.

Proposed Occupancy

540 Commonwealth Avenue	
Rentable Square Feet (RSF)	16,280 RSF
Planned Use of Space	Faculty / staff offices and online instruction studios
Location of Office and Work Space	Floors 2 and 3 of 3-story office building
Occupancy Date	August 15, 2020

Description of Interior Space

The building is located on an approximately 9,331 sf parcel in the Kenmore Square neighborhood of Boston. It is bounded by Commonwealth Avenue to the north, Brookline Avenue to the west, and Newbury Street to the south. The 26,850 sf, three-story building shares a wall with the abutting buildings to the east and west. All three buildings have commercial uses on the ground floor. The site is located adjacent to the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority's (MBTA) Green Line Kenmore Station and is in close proximity to the MBTA Commuter Rail Lansdowne Station.

The upper two floors of the building were previously used as a Kaplan Testing Prep center. Each floor contains a variety of spaces previously used for instructional and conference uses as well as men's and women's restrooms. Stairs and an elevator serve each floor and are located toward the center of the floor plan. An additional fire stair is located along the south end of the building. The ground floor includes only the stairwell and a small lobby for the elevator.

MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Past Experience

Boston University has extensive experience operating commercial office space in Kenmore Square. For several decades, the University owned and operated over 300,000 square feet on the north side of Kenmore Square. In 2018, the buildings were sold to a commercial developer (Related Beal) and are currently being redeveloped.

Proposed University Personnel

The space will be occupied by Boston University faculty and staff who develop online coursework. As with on-campus locations, the University will be responsible for the interior maintenance and cleaning of its leased space at 540 Commonwealth Avenue.

Prescribed Path(s) of Travel to Campus

The property is in the south west corner of Kenmore Square, at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue, Brookline Avenue and Beacon Street. Paths to the various campus buildings from the property include signaled intersections.

The University operates the BU Shuttle that traverses the campus on a regular schedule. The shuttle will operate with a reduced number of passengers on board at any one time, both seated and standing, and riders will enter only through the rear door. Riders must wear face coverings at all times. A new Terrier Transit app will be launched in the fall allowing students to consider all their transportation options and routes in one mobile app - BU Shuttle, MBTA buses and trains, walking, bicycling, Bluebikes, and Zipcar. The BU Shuttle fleet will be disinfected following peak service times each day, and at night prior to service the following day.

Rules Regarding Face Coverings

The University is committed to promoting a safe campus environment for students, faculty, and staff in accordance with current state and local public safety guidelines. Face coverings must be worn at all times: in any shared spaces, in BU student residences, in all University buildings, on the BU Shuttle, and on public transportation, as well as on the street and in public spaces. Wearing a face covering does not replace the need to maintain physical distancing and observing safety protocols in shared spaces.

COVID-19 Public Health Protocols

Boston University is implementing comprehensive public health protocols to limit the spread of COVID-19. The protocols include daily attestation, mandatory use of face coverings, social distancing, hand washing, enhanced HVAC ventilation and filtration, expanded cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces, expanded in-house virus testing, contact tracing, and comprehensive communication with students, faculty, and staff.

The in-house COVID-19 testing program for students, faculty, and staff this fall will focus on identifying both asymptomatic and symptomatic members of our community who are carrying COVID-19 so they can be promptly treated and isolated. While bringing a testing program in-house is an enormous undertaking, the University will be able to test and monitor our community faster as a result.

BU will establish test collection sites in August on both the Charles River and Medical Campuses, with different locations to be announced for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. The University will use the RT-PCR, or reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction, testing method which detects both symptomatic and asymptomatic infections. The test is highly specific for COVID-19, with an extremely low false positive rate.

Testing will be collected by the AN (anterior nares) self-administered method of acquisition from the nostril, with observation, at one of several testing sites on our campuses. The tests will be run through a laboratory established at the Rajen Kilachand Center for Integrated Life Sciences & Engineering, on the Charles River Campus.

The new BU Clinical Testing Lab will be run and overseen by certified clinical lab professionals and will work closely with BU Student Health Services and the BU Occupational Health Center. The facility has the capacity to process over 5,000 tests per day for the BU community, and results should be delivered confidentially within 24 hours. In all cases, faculty, staff, and students will receive test results and further instructions, as needed.

A web-based process is under development for use this fall to guide BU community members living, learning, or working on campus to a daily survey attesting whether they have COVID-19 symptoms. Students will complete this survey securely via Student Health Services Patient Connect. Faculty and staff will complete the survey via a separate health screening system. Survey results will route to medical professionals in the appropriate BU medical office—Student Health Services for students or the Occupational Health Center for faculty and staff.

Upon completion of the daily survey, individuals will receive a COVID-19 pass or status message that they may be required to show to enter BU buildings and events. The pass or status will indicate that individuals are clear to come to campus if they are asymptomatic, in compliance with the testing schedule, and have recently tested negative for COVID-19. Otherwise, it will indicate that they are overdue for testing/survey or advised to stay home until contacted by a medical health professional.

Cleaning Protocols

Following CDC guidance, Boston University's Facilities Management and Operations has developed new protocols in response to COVID-19. All custodial and trades staff wearing a mask and gloves while cleaning and providing maintenance services.

The overall levels and frequencies of cleaning have been enhanced to ensure high-touch points, such as elevator buttons, faucets, doorknobs, and handrails are disinfected using EPA-approved disinfectants multiple times a day. Additionally, custodial staff are using new equipment to clean and disinfect spaces across all buildings at BU, such as electrostatic broad spectrum sprayers that aerosolize viricidal cleaning agents that can be used in residences, dining facilities, laboratories, offices, classrooms, and other spaces on campus.

THE SHUBERT
FOUNDATION INC.

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VIA FEDEX

July 21, 2020

Boston Planning and Development Agency
1 City Hall Square, #9
Boston, MA 02201
Attn: Edward Carmody (PM)

Re: Authorization by Owner for request by Boston University for Temporary Change of Use for 540 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA

The Shubert Foundation, Inc. ("Owner") is the fee owner of the building located at 540 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts (the "Building"). Owner has entered into a five-year lease with Boston University ("BU") for use of the Building to aid BU in its effort to de-densify the campus by providing distance learning and other office uses during the pendency of the COVID-19 public health crisis and beyond.

With this letter, Owner hereby grants BU authorization to seek from the Boston Planning and Development Agency ("BPDA") and/or the Boston Inspectional Services Department ("ISD") a temporary change in use of the Building for University use.

Please do not hesitate to contact Julio Peterson, Vice President of Real Estate at (212)-944-4522 with any questions.

Sincerely,

THE SHUBERT FOUNDATION, INC.

By 

Gilbert C. Hoover, IV
Secretary

