

March 9, 2022

Mayor Michelle Wu  
1 City Hall Square, Suite 500  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mayor Wu,

We are reaching out to emphasize our opposition to the proposed Cross Street Boutique Hotel in the North End and to request that you inform the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) that the project should not move forward as currently proposed. Residents in the North End appreciated your statement at the October 14, 2021 North End Waterfront Residents' Association (NEWRA) meeting that you would stand with the community on this proposed development.

Reasons for opposing the proposed hotel have been stated in hundreds of community comment letters to the BPDA and in Impact Advisory Group and general public meetings. They include the following:

- 1) **The project site is an inappropriate location for a 5-story, 140-room hotel.** The proposed building's massing and hotel/restaurant operations will cause serious long-term impacts to the community, city parkland, and public rights of way. The project would be shoehorned between dense residential buildings, the City's Vincent Cutillo Park (slated for major renovation this year), a pedestrian and neighborhood parking plaza, and a tight, difficult and heavily traveled stretch of Cross Street. For many decades, the site has been a 1-story block of small businesses that served the neighborhood. The proposed 5-story hotel and rooftop dining terrace will cast shadow and reduce daylight in Cutillo Park, block dozens of residential units, and impose long-term hotel and restaurant operational impacts on the park and on dozens of residences on Endicott, Stillman and Salem streets. The project's proposed hotel and restaurants lack any service to our residential community and will instead increase already heavy visitor activity and traffic in our neighborhood. The developer proposes to utilize much of the existing pedestrian and neighborhood parking plaza for hotel/restaurant operations and proposes to narrow the already tight lanes of Cross Street to provide a drop-off/delivery zone.

**In its comment letter dated April 19, 2021, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department stated the following in regards to the impact on Cutillo Park:** *The height and massing will impact the public's experience of the park, year round. Views over the existing commercial buildings provide access to light and sky in the dense North End neighborhood. Containing this side of the park with a 67' tall building (including rooftop dining terrace) will reduce the quality of the open space. Vegetation will receive fewer hours of sunlight which may reduce the viability of new plantings (existing trees will survive but new trees in the future may not be successful).*

- 2) **The proposed project will impose the significant impacts that Article 54, Section 18 (Rooftop Structure and Building Heights) of the Boston Zoning Code is intended to avoid.** "Any proposed construction on the lot that would exceed the prior height shall require Board of Appeal approval ... In making its decision, the Board of Appeal shall consider whether such roof structure has the potential for significantly restricting light and/or air flow to adjacent structures and/or significantly restricting views from roofs, windows, doors, or balconies."

- 3) The project site lies within both the North End Neighborhood District and the BPDA's Greenway Study area. **In the nearly 30 years since Article 54 (North End Neighborhood District) was added to the Zoning Code in 1993, the Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA" d.b.a. "BPDA") has not complied with the requirement in Article 54, Section 2 to prepare the "North End Neighborhood Plan."** Because Article 54 is "an integral part of, and one of the means of implementing, the North End Neighborhood Plan," Article 54 does not stand alone. The BRA should not approve any major redevelopment in the North End in the absence of a neighborhood-wide plan intended to assure that future growth and development would protect and promote the sustainability of our residential neighborhood. Furthermore, the BPDA's Greenway District Study lacked consideration of neighborhood services or the residential and parkland impacts of redevelopment at the proposed hotel site.
- 4) **Many North End residents have raised concern with what they believe has been the BPDA's obstruction of public engagement and lack of transparency in the Article 80 process.** Even the BPDA's next step in the Article 80 process has been and remains unclear. And as stated in the Friends of Cuttillo Park's February 28, 2022 comment letter to the BPDA: *Despite the attempted manipulation of the public process by the developer and the BPDA, the majority of North End residents are adamantly against the hotel proposal. Tensions regarding the over saturation of tourists in the North End are getting quite a bit of press right now, but little is being said about how a far too large proposal that ignores regulatory laws and standards is trying to be approved under the radar.*

North End residents, including abutters, are eager for a redevelopment of this small piece of property that is sensitive to adjacent residences and public parkland and supports the sustainability of our residential community. A 5-story hotel with a rooftop bar rivaling the Seaport offerings is not appropriate in this residential community and will create a barrier between the North End and the Greenway.

Thank you,



Cheryl Delgreco  
President, NEWRA



Kirsten Hoffman, President  
Friends of Cuttillo Park

cc: Senator and Councilor Lydia Edwards  
Representative Aaron Michlewitz