

**THE IMPACT ADVISORY GROUP
FOR THE GOVERNMENT CENTER GARAGE PROJECT**

September 16, 2009

Ms. Kristin Kara, Senior Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Kristin:

As you may know, members of the IAG have met occasionally to review our progress to date as well as how we would like IAG meetings to move forward from here, both substantively and procedurally. We have concluded that:

- ❖ The IAG itself needs to be more proactively involved in setting the schedules and agendas for future IAG meetings.
- ❖ The agendas for those meetings now need to be focused on a series of issues that were raised in the IAG consensus comments on the PNF/ENF, and in the public comments of IAG members and others, but have not yet been satisfactorily addressed.
- ❖ We need to allow more time in our IAG meetings for input, feedback and discussion by IAG members and the public.

Among the substantive issues of particular community interest and concern that we believe need to be addressed in future IAG meetings:

- ❖ *Proposed Project Height, Massing and Density* – since many, if not most, consider the height, massing and density as described in the PNF/ENF to be inappropriate and unacceptable and its economic justification has yet to be demonstrated.
- ❖ *Evaluation of Zoning-Compliant Options* – including the viability of developing ONLY the called Front Parcel (1,1a and 1b), which is now shown as the first phase of the proposed development as outlined in the PNF/ENF. Such a smaller scale development could well accomplish many of the acknowledged community benefits of the project – new retail and residential resources, maintenance of significant amounts of existing parking, and opening Congress Street to air, light and improved pedestrian circulation – thereby reinforcing and reconnect adjacent neighborhoods. And it would do so without the adverse environmental and community impacts, and the zoning and planning variances, required by full site redevelopment as now proposed in the PNF/ENF.
- ❖ *The Mix and Balance of Proposed Project Uses* – given community concern that the mix and balance of project as now proposed in the PNF/ENF does not appropriately reflect the existing mix of uses in the adjacent communities and does not contain a sufficient proportion of residential uses.

- ❖ *Actual Architectural and Design Details* – since the IAG has yet to see any architectural and design plans beyond the initial conceptual designs that which were first presented more than a year ago.
- ❖ *Required Performance Standards:* A number of review criteria must be addressed in detail and early in the Article 80 process. These include how the developer plans to meet required performance standards that require any and all project alternatives to *complement and fit in* with the surrounding neighborhoods as well as positive urban benefits that *far outweigh* projected negative impacts.
- ❖ *Consistency with Other Relevant BRA Planning Studies* – particularly those for the Greenway District Planning District, the Government Center Green Growth District, and the West End Master Planning Framework -- since the Scoping Determination makes very clear that the developer must take into account and discuss such planning and master planning initiatives insofar as they relate to the development of the Government Center Garage site.
- ❖ *The Public Elementary School Option* – specifically the nature, scope and schedule of the evaluation process required by the Scoping Determination, including whether this potential community benefit would add to the height and density that would otherwise be proposed for this development.

Since our next scheduled IAG meeting at 6:00 PM on September 23rd has now been cancelled, we would propose that we meet with you as originally planned to discuss these IAG requests and recommendations – either at the BRA or at 101 Merrimac Street. Please be assured that we have complete confidence in your excellent leadership of this process thus far; but we also feel the need to be more fully and actively involved in the process as we move forward.

Sincerely,

The Impact Advisory Group for the Government Center Garage Project