



West End Civic Association



NORTH END / WATERFRONT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

June 23, 2022

James Arthur Jemison II, Chief of Planning/Director
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Subject: 251 Causeway Street Redevelopment Proposal

Dear Mr. Jemison:

First, the West End Civic Association (WECA) and the North End/Waterfront Residents' Association (NEWRA) congratulate you on being appointed to the positions of Chief of Planning and Director of the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA). We look forward to your affirming Mayor Wu's commitment for structural changes that will elevate city planning, reform the City's development process, and bring more public transparency and involvement to the City's growth and future. It is in this spirit that we write to you at this time.

WECA and NEWRA recently became aware of an owner/developer's proposal to redevelop 251 Causeway Street and adjacent properties along North Washington Street within the Bulfinch Triangle section of the West End. We are writing to you to request early public notice of and transparency in any City or BPDA conversations or other interactions with the developer, and we seek information you may now have about the redevelopment proposal. We understand from certain stakeholders who were recently approached by commercial real estate management company RMR Group that there is a redevelopment proposal involving the construction of a multi-use tower that could replace existing renovated 100-year-old buildings at 251 Causeway Street, 126-132 North Washington Street, and 100 North Washington Street with a building rising to as high as 700 feet. We are unaware of any planning by the City that has evaluated, let alone recommended, such height and density. Based on past planning, the Zoning Code for the Bulfinch Triangle District limits height to 100 feet and floor area ratio (FAR) to 7.0, even then only when a project complies with Large Project Review and receives Compliance Certification.

251 Causeway Street, 126-132 North Washington Street, and 100 North Washington Street currently fit into an architectural and historical framework related to the manufacturing history of the immediate district. The sites are located at the edges of two historic residential neighborhoods in a sensitive area that includes many residential properties, a public school, public waterfront parks and other waterfront resources, a proposed bridge/park now under construction, and the Freedom Trail. The sites abut one of the most heavily travelled and most problematic street intersections in Downtown Boston.

NEWRA and WECA request information you and your Planning and BPDA staff can provide about this redevelopment proposal, and we welcome communication with you regarding Mayor Wu's approach to the evaluation of development proposals that exceed the restrictions in the Zoning Code. Prior to commencing any Article 80 review of a project that would greatly increase density within the already overburdened Bulfinch Triangle District, the City should conduct a detailed analysis, with public participation, to determine that existing zoning should stand or that updated district planning is warranted. If the latter, no Article 80 project review should commence until planning is complete.

Sincerely,



Susann Benoit, Chair
Zoning and Planning Committee
WECA



Victor Brogna, Chair
Zoning, Licensing and Construction Committee
NEWRA

cc: Senator Lydia Edwards
Senator Sal N. DiDomenico
Representative Aaron M. Michelwitz
Representative Jay D. Livingstone
City Councilor Gabriella Coletta
City Councilor Kenzie Bok
City Councilor Ed Flynn
Ciara D'Amico, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Cheryl Delgreco, President, NEWRA
Joseph A. McDonald, President, WECA
Joel Faller, President, North End/Waterfront Neighborhood Council