



33 Broad Street | Suite 300 | Boston, MA 02109
Tel: 617-502-6240 | Fax: 617-502-6236

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June 19, 2009

William Tuttle
Deputy Director of Real Estate
Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
State Transportation Building
Ten Park Plaza, Suite 4610
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Re: Parcel 9 comments

Dear Mr. Tuttle:

A Better City has advocated for the location of civic and cultural uses in the Greenway corridor for several years for several reasons related to the goal of activating the open spaces of the Greenway. A continuing concern behind our guiding principles for the corridor has been that the open space design, activities, and the uses along the edges of the Greenway need to generate activity throughout the hours of the day for all days of the week, and all seasons of the year in order for the spaces to be considered successful. The analysis of our several studies on the corridor conducted over the years has indicated that the right mix of civic and cultural functions provide a balanced and active use that will help to support the all season vitality that is required to meet that objective for the Greenway.

At the Parcel 9 location, the mix of the proposed market activities on the ground floor and the cultural uses of the Boston Museum on the upper floors provide the combination of activities that we find most beneficial for this site and the adjacent Greenway parcels. The notion of a bridge over the difficult to develop Parcel 12 associated with this proposal also provides a solution to making that parcel more attractive for Greenway users.

Given the challenges presented by the current economic conditions and development climate, it is imperative that a use is selected for Parcel 9 that can be financed, implemented, and operated successfully and within a reasonable time frame. Toward that end, it will be important that the Boston Museum proponents continue to demonstrate the feasibility of their concept and that they can provide a viable and convincing business plan that will attract the financing required to execute the concept. The proponents will need to provide a realistic and convincing schedule for delivering the proposed museum and market. We also await the preparation of design guidelines or other direction that will come out of the ongoing Greenway District Planning Study, which should shape any buildings proposed for Parcel 7. An acceptable proposal needs to be consistent with those forthcoming guidelines.

If these conditions can be successfully met, then we believe that the Boston Museum proposal for the long term lease of Parcel 9 is the best combination of uses for the site and we support its designation for this location.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Dimino
President and CEO

