



October 24, 2014

Secretary Maeve Vallely Bartlett
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
Attn: MEPA Office EEA #14069
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900
Boston MA 02114

RE: Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Redevelopment of the Government Center Garage, MEPA #15134

Dear Secretary Vallely Bartlett:

WalkBoston has reviewed this document to identify potential implications for pedestrians. We offer the following comments.

Sidewalk Widths

The FEIR contains detailed drawings of sidewalk widths at all locations, and WalkBoston believes that the widths are completely adequate, except as noted below at the outer bus bays facing the Greenway. On map B.2 – Conceptual Improvement Plan, Bus Bays #4, 5, and 6 are shown with sidewalks that are only 8.5 feet wide, compared with those of Bus Bays #1, 2, and 3, which have 15 foot sidewalks without encroachments. Bays 4, 5, and 6 also appear to have a line of windbreaks that encroach on the 8.5' width. No benches are shown, but the text response to our DEIR comments states that, "Additional measures, such as windbreaks and seating areas will also be incorporated into the reconfigured Haymarket Bus Station area." The relatively narrow sidewalk coupled with windbreaks and potentially benches as well, could make the sidewalk uncomfortably narrow and crowded at Bays 4, 5, and 6. We urge the proponent to consider a modest re-distribution of space to provide wider sidewalks at these bus stops.

Truck loading bays

WalkBoston continues to be concerned about loading docks that require trucks to back from the major adjoining streets into the building. Two of these streets are major access ways into Central Artery (I-93) and will require very careful operation to be safe for both pedestrians and other vehicles. Clear and enforced management should stipulate that they will not be used, except in emergencies, during daytime working and peak travel times.

Cut-ins on sidewalks

Cut-ins proposed on three sides of the East Parcel and two sides of the West Parcel should also be managed to reduce conflicts with pedestrians as loading and unloading occurs from vehicles. Management of the site should ensure that use of the cut-ins for deliveries (not for guest or resident drop off) is minimized during busy portions of the day or evening.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project. Please feel free to contact us if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

Robert Sloane
Senior Planner

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