



May 9, 2014

Secretary Richard Sullivan, Jr.
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Attn: Deidre Buckley, Director, MEPA Office
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Landmark Center, Boston MA
Expanded Environmental Notification Form - MEPA 15183

Dear Secretary Sullivan:

The Landmark Center, formerly the Sears Warehouse and Distribution Center, occupies an 8.8 acre site in the Fenway. It is a major city landmark and retail center that is at the heart of a burgeoning residential district. This proposed development will intensify the use of the site, making it more of a transit-oriented development, and includes 600 housing units, additional retail and new office spaces. The residential units will be housed in a high-rise building of some 12-13 stories immediately adjacent to the Fenway MBTA station. There will be 110,000 sf of new retail space, including a new Wegman's Supermarket. Office space, already the single largest use in the building, at 635,000 SF, will be only slightly increased.

Many of the design features of this proposal will benefit pedestrians. Surface parking is replaced by about 1.3 acres of open space, setting off the historic Sears Building and including generous pedestrian walking and sitting accommodations. A new public green at the corner of Park Drive and Brookline Avenue is located where the heaviest pedestrian traffic crosses the street. The existing surface parking and the existing parking garage will be removed. A new underground garage will replace the existing 1500 parking spaces.

The proposed design is organized around pedestrian access. The existing internal circulation in the old Sears Building will be augmented by new pedestrian facilities connecting the Wegman's market facing Fullerton Street on the east side of the property with retail facilities that face Park Drive on the west. A new pedestrian connection will be made via a walking route that passes through the building connecting the MBTA station on the north side of the site and Brookline Avenue on the south.

To build on these excellent elements of the proposal, we suggest that the proponent also consider the following possibilities:

1. Rationalize the odd combination of parallel streets on the east side of the site.
Both Fullerton and Minor Streets, directly parallel and adjacent to each other, abut the site on the east side. At present, pedestrians may be only slightly affected by this oddity, largely because both streets are narrow and carry little traffic. However, under the proposed design Fullerton Street is being laid out as the major access route for all trucks and service vehicles and a major entrance into the underground parking garage. Fullerton Street is also called out as a pedestrian connection to the Fenway Multi-Use Path on the north side of the site, and carries large volumes of pedestrians before and after Red Sox games when the garage is in

MAKING MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE

heavy use. Pedestrian safety on Fullerton Street may become an issue, depending on traffic volumes using the street for site access.

2. More clearly define and design the proposed use of the pedestrian areas.

The spacious new open space on the Park Drive side of the site is only vaguely outlined in the EENF. It replaces a large parking area, and will provide a substantial improvement in safety and amenity for pedestrians walking between the MBTA station and both the project and Brookline Avenue. To make this a successful outdoor space that functions as more than a passage around the buildings consideration should be given to sitting, eating, strolling and potential assembly areas. Design of each of the spaces might take into account the need for some protection from the elements (sunlight included). Major features of interest such as a fountain, a sidewalk café, or a sculpture or other visual displays might be added.

3. Work with the City to complete the portion of the Fenway Multi-Use Path that is adjacent to the property

This project and the air rights project (Parcel 7) at Kenmore both include segments of the proposed path that connects the Riverway and Kenmore Square. The proponent has made construction of the path contingent on the City obtaining necessary approvals, and we urge the proponent to work closely with the City to accomplish that goal, and to work with the City to clarify a list of needed approvals and explain how they will be obtained. We also suggest that the proponent explore the possible use of the space for Red Sox related displays, photos, sculptures, artifacts since it is a potentially essential walking route for fans moving between the Fenway MBTA station and Fenway Park. The proponent should also work with the City to provide wayfinding signs along the path.

4. Clarify responsibility for building the Fenway Multi-Use Path connection to the Emerald Necklace.

In addition to the portion of the path that is adjacent to the property (described above), there is an additional relatively short section of the Path between the Riverway and the project site that is extremely important. Under existing conditions, some Fenway Station patrons must cross Park Drive at grade, in a location directly above the station that does not even have a crosswalk. Driver's sight lines of pedestrians are compromised due to the 'hump' of the bridge as it crosses over the Green Line. The completion of the Fenway Multi-Use Path under the Park Drive viaduct, directly adjacent to the Green Line tracks, would allow station patrons and other pedestrians to make this connection more safely and conveniently. This connection is important to the success of the site as a transit oriented development and the proponent should take a positive and active role in its construction. We urge the proponent to work with the MBTA and commit to constructing this important pedestrian facility. It would also be helpful if the pedestrian access that will be adjacent to the station could provide access to St. Mary's Street to improve safety for riders coming to the station from northwest of the point where Park Drive crosses Fenway Station.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this significant project.

Sincerely,



Robert Sloane
Senior Planner