



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: November 26, 2019

Subject: Alexandria Grand Junction Overlay District Zoning Petition

Recommendation: The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

The Planning Board held a public hearing on November 19, 2019, to discuss the third filing of this zoning petition (the "Petition") by Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc., ("the Petitioner") to establish a Grand Junction Overlay District encompassing two non-contiguous areas referred to as "Grand Junction Land" (a corridor running to the west of the Grand Junction rail right-of-way from Binney Street to Cambridge Street) and "Development Land" (the former Metropolitan Pipe site at Binney and Fulkerson Streets) with development controls contained in a new Section 20.1000 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Petition would authorize greater height and density for commercial uses on the Development Land but would require the Grand Junction Land to be preserved as public open space to be used for a planned multi-use pedestrian/bicycle pathway. The Board had discussed previous versions of the Petition at hearings on January 29, 2019, June 18, 2019, and July 23, 2019. Most recently, the Board had communicated a report to the City Council with comments but no positive or negative recommendation.

The Board received information and testimony from the Petitioner as well as members of the public, and reviewed prior materials that were submitted regarding this Petition. Following discussion among Board members, the Board voted to recommend that the City Council adopt the petition, with eight members voting in favor and one member abstaining. The majority of Board members agreed that the proposal had improved from its original iteration due to reductions in the proposed height and scale of development that would be enabled. The Board also appreciated the Petitioner's concerted discussions with neighboring residents as well as the Petitioner's ongoing efforts to resolve issues related to the abutting site controlled by Eversource. Some of the concerns previously expressed by Board members were addressed by the provision of a detailed Letter of Commitment describing community benefits, including resources for developing the planned Grand Junction Pathway.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

Catherine Preston Connolly (SS)

Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair.