

City of Cambridge
Department of Public Works

Owen O'Riordan, Commissioner

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August 18, 2021

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Katherine F. Watkins
City Engineer

RE: 544-550 Massachusetts Ave: Application for Special Permit

We are in receipt of the Special Permit Application materials, dated July 20, 2021 for the redevelopment of the site known as 544-550 Massachusetts Ave. We have reviewed the materials and have presented below some comments related to the interests of the Department of Public Works.

Stormwater Management:

Under the City Land Disturbance Regulations due to the project requiring a Special Permit from the Planning Board, the Applicant will need to obtain a Stormwater Control Permit from the Department of Public Works. The permit requirements cover the design standards and long term operation and maintenance of a management system for the project site, as well as the construction phase erosion and sedimentation control plans. The permit requirements also include the standard to mitigate the stormwater runoff from the site from the proposed 25-year storm to a rate below the pre-redevelopment 2-year storm event.

The Application acknowledges the Stormwater Control Permit, but does not provide any indication as to how the Standards will be achieved for the project. We respectfully request that the Applicant provide additional information on the how the project will meet the Standards as redevelopment project in dense parts of the City may encounter challenges as they look to meet the Permit requirements.

Public Infrastructure:


- The Owner of this parcel worked with the DPW to abandon a vault under the public sidewalk along the building frontage. The sidewalk has been temporarily patched with asphalt to allow for this project to be constructed. Upon completion of the construction, the DPW will work with the Applicant to replace the sidewalk to the current standards for the district. Mitigation for work in the roadway will be reviewed and evaluated as the plans are progressed and impacts are realized.

- There are no significant trees located on the project parcel but there are Street Trees along the Mass Ave frontage of the site. The project should look to preserve and protect these trees for the long term and shall confirm that anticipated construction practices will not impact the vitality of these Street Trees.

A thorough review of the development at submission of a building permit and during design and construction will be required by the DPW .

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns related to the comments provided above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katherine Watkins", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katherine F. Watkins, P.E.
City Engineer