

Linden Park Residents Association, Inc.

September 15, 2020

By Email

Kathleen L. Born
Chair, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
244 Main Street, 8th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142

Re: MXD Article 14 Zoning and Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan Amendment

Dear Chair Born:

We write on behalf of the Linden Park Residents Association in enthusiastic support of this proposed zoning amendment. Our association consists of the approximately 55 houses on James Way, Michael Way, and Cornelius Way in the Harrington-Wellington Neighborhood. Located just behind the Kendall Square Cinema, we are among the closest residents to the property affected by this zoning amendment.

As brief background, this amendment is based on Eversource's need to build an electric substation to service the Kendall Square area. About 18 months ago, Eversource announced its intent to build the substation at 135 Fulkerson Street—across the street from the Kennedy-Longfellow Elementary School and abutting the Linden Park and East Cambridge neighborhoods. This was a poor choice for large electric infrastructure. The two neighborhoods, the City Manager, the City Council, and several East Cambridge and Kendall Square businesses, among many others, impressed upon Eversource the need for a new location. Recognizing the united community opposition to its initial proposal, Eversource expressed a willingness to relocate the substation if an alternate site were available.

This amendment makes Eversource's alternate site possible. Boston Properties has offered to locate the substation on this site (where the Blue Street Garage is currently located) and place it underground to provide additional open space, following successful examples such as the West End Substation in Vancouver. We recognize that this is an incredibly complicated and expensive endeavor—among other reasons, the existing parking will need to be rebuilt underground, and the substation and transmission lines will need to be engineered around the other infrastructure. It is fair that Boston Properties receive an upzoning in exchange for bearing these heavy costs.

We view this proposal as a win for everyone. The substation will be located in the Kendall Square business district—which was the major contributor for the substation's need in the first place. There will be no loss of housing originally planned for the site. Because the substation will now be placed underground, those future residents will benefit from open space. And as part of a separate zoning petition for Alexandria approved by the City Council in March, the original substation site on Fulkerson will one day be given to the City to be used as housing or open space. In short, this amendment has the potential to make both sites—and the entire neighborhood—better.

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Thank you for your consideration of our views. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Very Truly Yours,



Jim Gray
President
Linden Park Neighborhood Assn



Matthew Connolly
Vice President & Secretary
Linden Park Neighborhood Assn



Jason Stockmann
Treasurer
Linden Park Neighborhood Assn

cc: Louis DePasquale, City Manager
City Council
Todd Lanham, Eversource