

ENF Environmental Notification Form

<i>For Office Use Only</i> Executive Office of Environmental Affairs	
EOEA No.:	<u>14304</u>
MEPA Analyst:	<u>Deirdre Buckley</u>
Phone:	617-626- <u>1044</u>

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: The Merano		
Street: Causeway Street, Beverly Street, Valenti Way and Medford Street		
Municipality: Boston	Watershed: Boston Harbor	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: UTM (Zone 19) 330420, 4692421	Latitude: 42°21'56.1" N	Longitude: 71°03'33.8" W
Estimated commencement date: January 2009	Estimated completion date: 2010	
Approximate cost: \$160,000,000	Status of project design: 10 %complete	
Proponent: Boston Development Group		
Street: 93 Union Street, Suite 315		
Municipality: Newton	State: MA	Zip Code: 02459
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this ENF May Be Obtained: Corinne Snowdon		
Firm/Agency: Epsilon Associates, Inc.	Street: 3 Clock Tower Place, Suite 250	
Municipality: Maynard	State: MA	Zip Code: 01754
Phone: (978) 897-7100	Fax: (978) 897-0099	E-mail: csnowdon@epsilonassociates.com

Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)?
 Yes No

Has this project been filed with MEPA before?
 Yes (EOEA No. _____) No

Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before?
 Yes (EOEA No. 4325) No

Is this an Expanded ENF (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) requesting:
 a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8)) Yes No
 a Special Review Procedure? (see 301 CMR 11.09) Yes No
 a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11) Yes No See Appendix A
 a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11) Yes No

Identify any financial assistance or land transfer from an agency of the Commonwealth, including the agency name and the amount of funding or land area (in acres): Parcel 1B will be the subject of a long-term ground lease from the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA).

Are you requesting coordinated review with any other federal, state, regional, or local agency?
 Yes (Specify _____) No (The Project is undergoing review by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) under Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code.)

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals:

FEDERAL: US EPA - National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Review (if required); Federal Highway Administration - Approval of Non-Highway Use of Highway ROW, Surplus approval, Section 106 Review; SHPO – Section 106 Review

LOCAL: Boston Redevelopment Authority – Article 80 Review; Boston Civic Design Commission – Design Approval; Boston Transportation Department - Construction Management Plan, Transportation Access Plan Agreement; Boston Zoning Board of Appeal – Zoning Relief; Boston Landmarks Commission - Party to Section 106 Review, Article 85 Demolition Delay Review; Boston Parks and Recreation Commission - Approval of Demolition and Construction within 100 feet of park or parkway; Boston Air Pollution Control Commission – Parking Freeze Permit Exemption; Boston Public Safety Commission, Committee on Licenses - Permit to Erect and Maintain Parking Garage, Flammable Storage License; Boston Public Improvement Commission - Sidewalk and Street Related Permitting; Boston Water and Sewer Commission - Site Plan Approval, Utility Connection Permits; Boston Public Works Department - Curb Cut Permits (minor/driveways), Street Occupancy Permits (construction); Boston Fire Department - Approvals for fire protection systems; Boston Inspectional Services Department – Building Permit, Occupancy Permits

Which ENF or EIR review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03):

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land | <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Species | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands, Waterways, & Tidelands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Air | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid & Hazardous Waste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACEC | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical & Archaeological Resources |

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
LAND				<input type="checkbox"/> Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Superseding Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 91 License <input type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification <input type="checkbox"/> MHD or MDC Access Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Water Management Act Permit <input type="checkbox"/> New Source Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Other Permits (including Legislative Approvals) – Specify: MWRA: Sewer Use Discharge Permit, Construction Dewatering Permit EQT: Approvals Under MGL Ch40 Section 54a (if required) MHC: State Register Review
Total site acreage	1.26			
New acres of land altered		0		
Acres of impervious area	1.26	0	1.26	
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		0		
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		0		
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		0		
STRUCTURES				
Gross square footage	0	463,000	463,000	
Number of housing units	0	0	0	
Maximum height (in feet)	11	139	149	
TRANSPORTATION				
Vehicle trips per day				
Unadjusted	0	7,294	7,294	
Adjusted	0	2,044	2,044	
Parking spaces	68	135	203	

WASTEWATER			
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	0	63,701	63,701
GPD water withdrawal	0	0	0
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	0	57,910	57,910
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	0	0	0

CONSERVATION LAND: Will the project involve the conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?

Yes (Specify _____) No

Will it involve the release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction?

Yes (Specify _____) No

RARE SPECIES: Does the project site include Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities?

Yes (Specify _____) No

HISTORICAL /ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Does the project site include any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

Yes (Specify _____) No

If yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources?

Yes (Specify _____) No

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN: Is the project in or adjacent to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern?

Yes (Specify _____) No

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project description should include (a) a description of the project site, (b) a description of both on-site and off-site alternatives and the impacts associated with each alternative, and (c) potential on-site and off-site mitigation measures for each alternative (You may attach one additional page, if necessary.)

PROPOSED PROJECT

Located in Boston’s historic Bulfinch Triangle, the Merano Project (the Project) proposed by Boston Development Group, a division of First General Realty Corporation (the Proponent) is an approximately 463,000 square foot (sf) mixed-use development that includes approximately 190,000 sf of hotel uses split between a short-term and a long-term hotel, approximately 206,000 sf of office space, approximately 10,000 sf of retail space on the ground floor, approximately 13,000 sf of restaurant space on the ground floor, and approximately 93 double stacked spaces and 17 single parking spaces (203 total spaces) in a parking garage on the second floor. The Project site includes the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority’s (MTA) Parcel 1B and two parcels that are or will be owned by affiliates of the Proponent, referred to herein as Parcel 1C and 86-88 North Washington Street, and is bounded by Causeway Street, Beverly Street, Valenti Way, North Washington Street, and buildings along Medford Street, including 239 Causeway Street and 98 North Washington Street. Appendix B includes Figures 1 and 2 showing the location of the Project site, and Figure 3 which shows a proposed site plan. Appendix B also includes floor plans and elevations of the proposed Project.

In response to comments from the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC), the Project design has been revised since submission of the BRA Project Notification Form (PNF). The modifications include minor changes to the building structure along Beverly Street above the porte cochere, and the following:

- ◆ Setting the first floor back at the corner of Beverly Street and Causeway Street in order to create a plaza area, complementing the plaza created on the opposite corner by the Parcel 1 project;
- ◆ Aligning the façade along Causeway Street with the façade of 239 Causeway Street;
- ◆ Lowering of the office portion at the corner of Valenti Way and North Washington Street, to bring that portion of the building to the same height as the adjacent building, 90 North Washington Street; and
- ◆ Moving the ramp to the garage towards Valenti Way and the office and retail loading toward the porte cochere.

The Project emphasizes smart growth by incorporating sustainable design principles into the siting, planning, construction and operation of the Project. The Project's location proximate to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) Green and Orange Lines and the MBTA commuter rail link at North Station underscore the Project's strong connectivity to the public transit system. The Project's preliminary Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist and the Project's sustainability strategy are included as Appendix C.

PROJECT SITE

The Project site, made available for development through the demolition of the elevated I-93 highway structures, is approximately 54,900 sf in total, and consists of the MTA's Parcel 1B, to be ground leased by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, and two parcels that are or will be owned by affiliates of the Proponent, Parcel 1C and 86-88 North Washington Street. Located in the Bulfinch Triangle area, the Project adds to the mix of uses currently being considered or developed in the area, reconnecting the North End to the West End. In addition, the site is located proximate to public transportation facilities at North Station and Haymarket Station and is accessible to the regional roadway network.

ALTERNATIVES

Reduction to 100 feet in height

The Proponent considered reducing the height of the proposed new construction to 100 feet, the recommended maximum height identified in the Joint Development Guidelines (JDG). The available floor area for office and hotel uses is limited by the setback required to provide fire separation and adequate light and air to rear elevations of 6-24 Medford Street and 90 North Washington Street, as well as easements for utilities. In addition, massing of the new construction above the Medford Street buildings has been held back as much as possible from the center of the block to minimize the visibility of the new construction from within the Causeway/North Washington Streets District. To reduce the height of the Project to 100 feet, four levels of office and five levels of hotel rooms would be removed, leaving only five floors of usable office space, six floors of hotel rooms, and one level for the hotel lobby. This reduction in height was determined to be infeasible since the Project would not be financially viable with these changes.

Reduction to between 101 feet and less than 149 feet in height

Although any Project over 100 feet would exceed the height recommendation identified in the JDG, consideration was given to reducing the height of the proposed Project to between 101 and less than 149 feet after determining that reducing the height to 100 feet was infeasible. To meet this goal, the size of the hotel and the floor area of office and retail spaces must be reduced, which would again make the Project financially unviable. This option was also determined to be infeasible.

As noted above, since the filing of the PNF with the BRA and Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Proponent has made certain design modifications in response to comments from the BCDC and the BRA.

MITIGATION

The Project will continue the ongoing redevelopment of the Bulfinch Triangle. The Project site will be transformed from a vacant parcel into a modern mixed-use development with active ground floor uses, and a new aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment. Additional benefits to the City are described below.

Smart Growth/Transit-Oriented Development

Consistent with smart growth principles, the Project focuses development in an area that was previously developed (i.e. the elevated I-93 and Green Line). In addition, the Project is located proximate to public transportation – the Green, Orange Line and commuter rail at North Station and bus service at Haymarket and on Causeway Street – and has a mix of complementary uses: office, hotel, restaurant, and retail.

The Proponent is committed to implementing a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program that supports the City's efforts to reduce dependence on the automobile by encouraging travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially during peak time periods, and by minimizing the Project's parking supply. Proposed TDM measures include limiting parking, designating a transportation coordinator, and providing bicycle racks.

Design

The site will be developed from a vacant lot to an active mixed-use development with retail and restaurant uses on the ground level and two hotel elements (one extended stay and the other short-term). The design of the new building centers on simple volumes for the office and hotel elements of the program, which are broken down in scale through the modulation of façade depth and varying materials of brick, stone, glass and precast concrete. The building fills out the site to the sidewalks, holding the street edge and aligning with adjacent parcels to provide definition to the newly created Beverly Street and Valenti Way. The development will enhance pedestrian access around and through the site by providing wide sidewalks and lighting. The building will be designed to be LEED certifiable, consistent with the requirements of Article 37 of the Boston Zoning Code. The development of this vacant site with hotel, office and retail uses will promote public safety, encourage walking and transit usage and improve safety and the pedestrian environment.

Improved Street and Pedestrian Environment

New ground-level retail and an improved streetscape, consistent with other developments in the area, will provide an improved pedestrian environment in the Bulfinch Triangle area for residents and visitors. The Project's development of a continuous streetwall along Causeway Street, Beverly Street and Valenti Way will further the ongoing creation of a new pedestrian district on the Bulfinch Triangle parcels. In addition, the Proponent has committed to donate \$12,000 toward the Bulfinch Triangle Streetscape Improvement Initiative.

Boston Crossroads Initiative

The Proponent will assist in the implementation of the Boston Crossroads Initiative, a planning effort to redesign and revitalize the roads that cross the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway and connect people to neighborhoods and destinations on either side. In particular, the Proponent is engaged in the ongoing public planning process for Causeway Street, which will create a more pedestrian-oriented corridor, strengthening the connection between the West End and the North End, and will donate \$300,000 to the Initiative or perform Crossroads-approved work adjacent to the Project site at a cost of \$300,000.

Bulfinch Triangle Traffic Study

The Proponent will provide \$50,000 toward the Bulfinch Triangle traffic study intended to improve traffic in the area and mitigate future traffic impacts. The study will be directed by the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and will likely involve other Bulfinch Triangle developers.

Sustainable Design / Green Building

In keeping with the City of Boston's Article 37 Green Buildings Zoning, the Project will achieve, at a minimum, the LEED certified level of 26-32 points. More information on sustainable design can be found in Appendix C.

Increased Employment

The Project will create approximately 200 to 240 construction jobs and will generate approximately 275 permanent jobs. The permanent jobs will result from the proposed office, retail, and hotel components.

New Property Tax and Hotel Tax Revenues

The new development will generate approximately \$2,000,000 in annual property taxes, approximately \$1,900,000 in annual state and local occupancy tax revenues, and approximately \$500,000 in Convention Center tax revenues.

Linkage

The Project will generate approximately \$2,518,400 in housing linkage funds and approximately \$502,400 in jobs linkage funds to the City of Boston.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ANALYSIS

Greenhouse gas emissions analysis for the Project, prepared in accordance with the MEPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy and Protocol, is included in Appendix C.