



WalkBoston

November 25, 2009

Secretary Ian Bowles
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
MEPA Office
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Report for development of
Massachusetts Turnpike Parcel 7 Air Rights in Boston
EOEA #14163

Dear Secretary Bowles:

WalkBoston appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Final Environmental Impact Report for development of Massachusetts Turnpike Parcel 7 Air Rights. The proposal calls for construction of a parking garage over the Turnpike along with a new Yawkey commuter rail station and several residential and office buildings. New streets will be constructed to provide improved access by autos into the site. Pedestrian ways will be created to connect the new buildings with both Beacon Street and Brookline Avenue.

Our principal concern is the safety and convenience that the project offers to pedestrians. We request that the following concerns be addressed in the plans for the development:

- A. Sidewalks along the south side of Beacon Street should be as wide as possible. On Beacon Street there is a considerable stretch of land along the project where sidewalk widths can be maximized.
- B. Sidewalks along the west side of Brookline Avenue are much more limited. Here, a simple widening does not appear to be possible. We are pleased that the proponent's plans seem to indicate a ground floor design that incorporates an arcade to provide a more substantial pedestrian area near the station entrance and the planned retail uses, and encourage the City to make such a design a requirement for the project.
- C. Entrances and exits for the parking garage over the Turnpike will affect pedestrian safety dramatically. Access into and out of the garage appears to be concentrated on the west side of Brookline Avenue just north of the entrance to Yawkey Station, and on Beacon Street at the eastern end of the development. Turning movements into and out of the garage will affect pedestrians at both locations at all times. Notwithstanding the operational needs of moving large

volumes of cars before and after baseball games, it will be critical to pedestrian safety to design these entrances (particularly the Brookline Street entrance) with tight curb radii, a limited number of lanes and level sidewalks. For everyday operations, flashing lights and sounds may help protect walkers crossing the access ways.

- D. Surges in pedestrian traffic come when baseball games are being played at Fenway Park. Surges from the pedestrian access ways into the garage and Yawkey Station will bring significant numbers of walkers onto Brookline Avenue. The location of pedestrian entrances and exits to Yawkey Station and the parking garage should be carefully considered. There are several possibilities to improve this situation:
1. Align the entrance to the parking garage and Yawkey Station more closely with Lansdowne Street. Here, existing intersection can be controlled by signals or police details for safer street crossings.
 2. Encourage the use of the main entrance to commuter rail station facing Yawkey Way Extension for access to Fenway Park games, and encourage the walk down Yawkey Way to the stadium. Signs and maps might encourage this movement. Pedestrian crossings at Brookline Avenue and Yawkey Way may be controlled by signals or police details.
- E. Yawkey Way Extension may play a major role for pedestrian access. The new street leads between the commuter rail station/parking garage and Brookline Avenue and on to Fenway Park. Future pedestrian traffic may require a wide sidewalk on the north side of the new street, to allow for the major flow of pedestrians moving to and from the stadium.
- F. The proposed multipurpose trail links to Fenway MBTA Station. This trail is an additional access way to and from the proposed Yawkey Way Extension and could provide significant pedestrian access to the stadium. Signs could encourage this movement for pedestrians. A wide sidewalk along the full length of Yawkey Way Extension – preferably on the north side of the street - is essential to connect this path to Brookline Avenue and Fenway Park.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Parcel 7 Air Rights Project. Please contact us for any clarification or additional comments that you may need.

Sincerely,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director

Robert Sloane
Senior Planner