

January 2020



Suffolk University

1 Court Street Residence Hall
Supplemental Information Document



SUBMITTED TO
Boston Planning and
Development Agency

PREPARED BY


IN ASSOCIATION WITH
NBBJ
C3

1 Court Street Residence Hall

Boston, Massachusetts

SUBMITTED TO **Boston Redevelopment Authority, d/b/a Boston Planning and Development Agency**
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

PROPONENT **Suffolk University**
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Boston, MA 02108

PREPARED BY **VHB**
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Boston, MA 02110

In association with:

NBBJ
C3

January 2020

Supplemental Information Document

This Supplemental Information Document (“SID”) provides responses to the BPDA Scoping Determination (“SD”) and all public comments received on the 1 Court Street Residence Hall PNF. It should be noted that while the SD and the majority of the comment letters provide combined comments on both the IMPNF and 1 Court Street Residence Hall PNF, the responses provided herein are specific to comments pertaining to the 1 Court Street Residence Hall project (the “Proposed Project”). Please refer to Chapter 11, *Response to Comments*, of the 2020 IMP for all other comments and responses.

1.1 Proposed Project Overview

In accordance with Article 80B, Large Project Review of the City of Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”), Suffolk University (“Suffolk,” or the “University”) submitted the Project Notification Form (“PNF”) on September 26, 2019, to the Boston Planning and Development Agency (“BPDA”) for conversion of the Ames Boston Hotel, an existing 114-room hotel, into a Suffolk University undergraduate residence hall consisting of up to 280 beds (the “Proposed Project”). The Ames Boston Hotel is located in the historic Ames Building at 1 Court Street in downtown Boston (the “Project Site”).

The Project Site, its building, and structure will remain the same; the conversion to student housing requires only the minimal effort of furniture replacement and security upgrades. There will also be no major changes to site or building access, or service and loading areas.

This approximately 102,073-gross square foot building will primarily serve as student housing with support spaces for various student activities, campus meetings, and events. The ground floor level will provide key uses, including a publicly accessible retail/restaurant area, student housing reception area (secure), and a student lounge area (secure). In summary, the proposed uses for the Proposed Project in the PNF include:

- › 114 student dorm rooms;
- › Up to 280 student beds;
- › Approximately 2,200 square feet of active ground floor uses, including approximately 1,512 square feet of retail/restaurant/café area accessible to the public, and approximately 708 square feet of secured student lounge area; and
- › Other supporting uses, including a student housing reception area, laundry room, bike storage—all of which will be secure and accessible only to University students.

It is anticipated that the Proposed Project will be ready for students to move into in the Fall of 2020 for the 2020-2021 academic year.

The student housing conversion project at the Ames Building will help replace the supply of on-campus beds once the lease of 1047 Commonwealth Avenue residences terminates in May 2020. The net change to the housing inventory will maintain the current ratio of FTE undergraduate students housed at approximately 30 percent.

1.1.1 Project Changes since PNF Filing

During the public comment period and meetings with public agencies concerning the project and its capacity as a student residence facility, Suffolk has explored the option of maximizing student occupancy. As noted in one of the comments by the Beacon Hill Civic Association (BHCA): "Suffolk should take this unique housing opportunity and use the project space at One Court Street to maximize the number of residential student beds that can be included in the building." Thus, after consultation with its professionals and engineers, Suffolk has determined that a slight increase from 280 beds to 300 beds will have no measurable impact on the building's systems or capacities. By increasing the student occupancy to up to 300 beds, Suffolk will further its housing goal to provide University housing for its undergraduate students.

The increased count in student beds to up to 300 beds will only result in minimal changes to the water demand and wastewater generation. There will be no traffic impacts. Table 1 summarizes the changes in potential impacts based on the latest proposed development program for 1 Court Street Residence Hall.

Table 1 Changes to Potential Impacts since PNF Filing

	Existing Capacity (Hotel Use)	Based on Program Proposed in PNF	Based on Changes since PNF Filing
Water Demand (gallons per year)	4,370,000	3,835,000	4,147,700
Wastewater Generation (gallons per year)	3,660,000	3,355,000	3,667,700
Traffic	N/A	No additional impact	No additional impact

Water Demand

The student housing conversion at the Ames Building will result in an overall decrease of water usage. The existing water capacity is equal to approximately 4,370,000 gallons per year. The water usage based on the new proposed development program will be approximately 4,147,700 gallons per year, which is still lower than the existing hotel use. All existing plumbing fixtures are to remain in operation; the existing cooling tower (installed in 2008) will also remain in use to serve the new residence hall.

Wastewater Generation

Wastewater generation for the new proposed development program will result in minimal increase from 3,660,000 to 3,667,700 gallons per year compared to the existing hotel use.

Transportation/Traffic Impact

Given that no on-site parking will be provided with the Proposed Project, there remains no additional traffic impact.

1.2 Responses to Comments

A copy of the SD and each comment letter received by the BPDA during the IMPNF and PNF public review period are attached in this document. Each letter is assigned a number, as listed in Table 1 below.

Table 2 Public Comment Letters

Letter No.	Commenter	Affiliation	Date Received (2019)
SD	Edward Carmody	BPDA	November 13
1	BPDA Planning Staff	BPDA	October 28
2	John (Tad) Read, Senior Deputy Director, Transportation & Infrastructure Planning; Manuel Esquivel, Senior Infrastructure & Energy Planning Fellow; and Ryan Walker, Smart Utilities Program Associate	BPDA	October 28
3 & 4*	John Sullivan	Boston Water and Sewer Commission	October 24
5	Eve Waterfall, Chair	Beacon Hill Civic Association	October 25
6	Greg Galer, Executive Director	Boston Preservation Alliance	October 25
7-16	Public Commenters (supportive)	Various	Various

* BWSC provided separate comment letters for the IMPNF and the 1 Court Street PNF delineated as Letters 3 and 4, respectively.

1.3 BPDA Scoping Determination

Comment SD.1

All development projects have construction impacts. As with any urban development there needs to be a balance of construction related inconveniences with the daily activities that will continue to occur adjacent to the project site. A detailed approach to the construction management must be included in the DPIR.

Response

Prior to the construction phase of the Project, the Construction Manager (CM) will prepare a Construction Management Plan, detailing measures to ensure the maintenance of existing levels of services and to minimize disruption to the area. A draft Construction Management Plan, highlighting key measures to be undertaken during the construction phase, has been provided in Appendix A.

Comment SD.2

Throughout this initial phase of review, the Proponent has taken steps to meet with local residents, elected officials, abutters, and City and State agencies. These conversations must continue, ensuring that what is presented in the DPIR is beneficial to the adjacent neighborhoods and the City of Boston as a whole.

Response

Since filing the IMPNF and the 1 Court Street Residence Hall PNF, Suffolk University continues engaging with elected officials and city departments, as well as local community organizations and residents. Elected officials and Task Force members will be kept fully informed as developments unfold. Meetings with City and State agencies are currently taking place and will continue. The University will continue to meet with all stakeholders throughout the public comment period and beyond. Some highlights of meetings facilitated to date include:

- › December 12, 2019: Meeting with Boston Landmark Commission (BLC);
- › January 6, 2020: Meeting with BPDA Planning staff;
- › January 6, 2020: Meeting with Boston Transportation Department (BTD) staff; and
- › January 13, 2020: Meeting with Boston Water & Sewer Commission (BWSC).

Comment SD.3

The BPDA encourages the Proponent to continue to work closely with City agencies, including the Boston Transportation Department (“BTD”). In particular, collaboration with the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and coordinator is strongly encouraged to enhance Suffolk’s current transit, parking management, and other TDM measures.

Response

On January 6, 2020, Suffolk University met with representatives from the Boston Transportation Department to discuss TDM measures. The University will continue coordinating with BTM to further enhance Suffolk's current transit, parking management, and TDM program.

Comment SD.4

The increase in on-campus student housing provided by the 1 Court Street Project is welcomed by the public, and the IMP should include a continued review of undergraduate and graduate student populations, particularly commuter (living at home) versus off-campus student counts, to provide full transparency of the University's current and projected enrollment and progress toward stated student housing goals.

Response

Refer to Section 2.6.6 of Chapter 2, *Mission and Objectives*, in the 2020 IMP.

Comment SD.5

Suffolk should work closely with BPDA and City staff on a proposed signage plan for the 1 Court Street building that resonates with its new use while respecting its historic façade. This should be consistent with a comprehensive campus signage package. Please see BPDA Urban Design comments in Appendix 1.

Response

Since the filing of the IMPNF and the 1 Court Street PNF, the University has met with representatives from BPDA, Boston Landmarks Commission and Boston Preservation Alliance regarding proposed signage. The University has worked with its Project Team to incorporate feedback from these agencies where feasible. Design review with the Boston Landmarks Commission has been scheduled for January 28, 2020.

Comment SD.6

Site improvements to the portion of the Washington Mall abutting the proposed ground floor café space should be considered in collaboration with BPDA staff.

Response

The University met with BPDA Planning staff on January 6, 2020, to discuss various site improvement opportunities, including the portion of the Washington Mall. The University will continue working with the appropriate city departments to discuss potential site and streetscape improvements.

Note: Comments SD.7 through SD.28 of the Scoping Determination focus on details specific to the 2020 IMP. For responses to these comments, please refer to Chapter 11, Response to Comments, of the 2020 IMP.

**BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

SCOPING DETERMINATION

FOR

**SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN**

PREAMBLE

On September 26, 2019, Suffolk University (“Suffolk”) submitted to the Boston Planning & Development Agency (“BPDA”) an Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (“IMP/NF”) and a Project Notification Form (“PNF”) seeking approval of a new Suffolk Institutional Master Plan (“IMP”) and detailing the 1 Court Street Residence Hall Project totaling approximately 102,073 square feet, a conversion of the former Ames Hotel into approximately 266-280 student housing beds, for its Campus in the Government Center area of Downtown, a site bounded by Court Street, the Washington Mall, and two existing structures at 17 Court Street and 1 Washington Mall. The program includes approximately 2,200 square feet of active ground floor use that consists of publicly accessible retail/café space as well as a secured student lounge (“Proposed Project”).

The BPDA will review the proposed IMP pursuant to Sections 80D and 80B of the Boston Zoning Code (“Code”). As part of the BPDA’s Article 80 review, Suffolk is required to prepare and submit to the BPDA a proposed IMP pursuant to Section 80D. The document must set forth in sufficient detail the planning framework of the institution and the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Projects included in the IMP to allow the BPDA to make a determination about the merits of the proposed IMP and Proposed Projects. **The proposed IMP shall contain the information necessary to meet the specifications of Article 80 as well as any additional information requested below.**

Copies of the IMP/NF and PNF were made available to the public in both electric and hard copy format. Task Force Meetings were held on September 5, 2019 and October 16, 2019, and a Public Meeting was held on October 16, 2019 at which the Proposed Project was presented. A Scoping Session was held on October 11, 2019 with public agencies. The comment deadline for the IMP/NF and PNF was October 28, 2019.

Based on review of the IMPNF/PNF, related comments, as well as a Scoping Session and Public Meeting, the BPDA hereby issues its written Scoping Determination (“Scope”) pursuant to Section 80D of the Code. A Draft Project Impact Report is not required for the Proposed Project at this time. However, Suffolk is requested to respond to all comments pertaining to the Proposed Project in the submission of the IMP. Written comments constitute an integral part of the Scoping Determination and should be responded to in the IMP or in another appropriate manner over the course of the review process. At other points during the public review of the IMP, the BPDA and other City agencies may require additional information to assist in the review of the Proposed IMP and Proposed Project.

In addition to the specific submission requirements outlined in the sections below, the following general issues should be noted:

- All development projects have construction impacts. As with any urban development there needs to be a balance of construction related inconveniences with the daily activities that will continue to occur adjacent to the project site. A detailed approach to the construction management must be included in the DPIR. SD.1
- Throughout this initial phase of review, the Proponent has taken steps to meet with local residents, elected officials, abutters, and City and State agencies. These conversations must continue, ensuring that what is presented in the DPIR is beneficial to the adjacent neighborhoods and the City of Boston as a whole. SD.2
- The BPDA encourages the Proponent to continue to work closely with City agencies, including the Boston Transportation Department (“BTD”). In particular, collaboration with the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and coordinator is strongly encouraged to enhance Suffolk’s current transit, parking management, and other TDM measures. SD.3
- The increase in on-campus student housing provided by the 1 Court Street Project is welcomed by the public, and the IMP should include a continued review of undergraduate and graduate student populations, particularly commuter (living at home) versus off-campus student counts, to provide full transparency of the University’s current and projected enrollment and progress toward stated student housing goals. SD.4
- Suffolk should work closely with BPDA and City staff on a proposed signage plan for the 1 Court Street building that resonates with its new use while respecting its historic façade. This should be consistent with a comprehensive campus signage package. Please see BPDA Urban Design comments in Appendix 1. SD.5

- Site improvements to the portion of the Washington Mall abutting the proposed ground floor café space should be considered in collaboration with BPDA staff. SD.6

1.4 Letter 1: BPDA Planning Staff

Comment 1.1

Signage for this building should be considered as part of the wider campus signage program, taking into account the unusually significant nature of this building. Because of the historic nature of the building, banner signage is not appropriate. Understanding that there is an interest in conveying to the public and students that the 1 Court Street Residence Hall is part of the University, creative ideas are welcome. Focusing on the ground floor windows is one place to start, as they offer good visibility and are often used for effective vinyl signage (while not blocking the view to the interior). Additionally, the awnings on the Washington Mall side of the building could be replaced with a solid, dark color (Suffolk University blue for example) with the name of the university on the free edge.

Response

Since the filing of the IMPNF and the 1 Court Street PNF, the University has met with representatives from BPDA, Boston Landmarks Commission and Boston Preservation Alliance regarding proposed signage. The University has worked with its Project Team to incorporate feedback from these agencies where feasible. Design review with the Boston Landmarks Commission is scheduled for January 28, 2020.

Comment 1.2

BPDA Urban Design staff encourage the University to meet early with Boston Landmarks Commission staff and the BPDA to come to a good signage proposal.

Response

Since the filing of the IMPNF and the 1 Court Street PNF, the University has met with representatives from BPDA, Boston Landmarks Commission and Boston Preservation Alliance regarding proposed signage. The University has worked with its Project Team to incorporate feedback from these agencies where feasible. Design review with the Boston Landmarks Commission has been scheduled for January 28, 2020.

Comment 1.3

For the 1 Court Street Residence, note that the area of Washington Mall adjacent to the Ames Building, including the granite terrace, is owned by the Boston Planning and Development Agency. Suffolk University will need to enter into a licensing agreement with the BPDA for the use of this area.

Response

Suffolk University met with BPDA on January 6, 2020 to discuss the licensing agreement for the use of the Washington Mall area adjacent to the Project Site.

Comment 1.4

Many of the changes made by the Cultivar restaurant were to be removed when the restaurant closed. That has not happened so we offer our best suggestions for how the University can move forward in this area.

- › *Retain the planters and seasonal plantings to hide the numerous penetrations to the granite. Alternately, remove the planters and railings and then repair the granite.*
- › *Remove the large, wood clad growing container to reestablish connectivity from the north of Washington Mall. Restore the steps on that side and replace the handrail to match the guardrails.*
- › *Remove the structure of the unapproved freestanding Cultivar sign on Washington Mall.*

Response

Suffolk University intends to keep the seasonal planters along the Washington Mall frontage as requested, while removing the large growing container. The container and its associated infrastructure will be reused at another location on the Suffolk campus (specific location has not yet been determined). In its place, pedestrian access to the north side of the patio will be restored. The freestanding Cultivar sign has already been removed. The University will continue coordinating with BPDA Planning staff to address site improvements where feasible.

Comment 1.5

Continue to work with the BPDA and BTM to determine the appropriate adjustments to the existing curbside regulations in front of the site (which is currently a valet zone).

Response

On January 6, 2020, Suffolk University met with BPDA and BTM staff to discuss opportunities for adjustments to the existing curbside regulations in front of the Project Site. An urban design analysis of the intersection demonstrates limited pedestrian benefit to a curb extension at the intersection of Washington and Court Streets and at the scale described by the City (approximately 18-24 inches). The location indicated by City staff is not a pedestrian crossing point, so unlike the extension at the intersection of Court Street and Court Square, this requested change would not reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts. Furthermore, there is ample pedestrian space in the adjacent Washington Mall, in addition to an existing sidewalk which is approximately 9 feet wide; which is consistent with the remainder of the block to the west of the Washington Mall. While such a curb extension would create some additional sidewalk space, it would require significant disruption to infrastructure (including sewer and telecommunications) for a very limited increase in pedestrian area. The University remains committed to working with the BPDA and

BTB to address concerns related to comfort and safety through the most effective and efficient means possible at the 1 Court Street site through other approaches.

Comment 1.6

Continue to work with the City to refine the currently proposed bike parking room from a design and capacity perspective. In-room accommodations can also be considered.

Response

On January 6, 2020, Suffolk University met with the Boston Transportation Department to discuss bicycle parking. In view of the constraints of retro-fitting an existing building to provide a bike room, and the inadequacy of existing elevators and corridors to facilitate in-room bike storage, it is infeasible to accommodate on-site bike parking. To compensate for this, Suffolk University is committed to making a one-time contribution to supplement existing BlueBikes accommodations in the vicinity of the Project Site. In addition, Suffolk University will review existing on-site bike accommodations throughout the campus to identify additional opportunities for increased bike parking capacity.

Comment 1.7

Contribute to the expansion of nearby BlueBikes facilities.

Response

On January 6, 2020, Suffolk University met with the Boston Transportation Department to discuss bicycle parking capacity. Suffolk University will make a one-time contribution to supplement existing BlueBikes accommodations in the vicinity of the Project site.

Comment 1.8

A new curb extension was recently installed at the end of the block at the existing Court St/Court Sq crosswalk. Additional curb extensions should be strongly considered to improve the public realm/pedestrian conditions at the Washington St end of the block to formalize and protect curb side operations and prevent moving through vehicles from using the curb side lane.

Response

Suffolk University is eager to promote pedestrian safety at the intersection of Washington and Court Streets. However, an urban design analysis of the intersection demonstrates limited pedestrian benefit to a curb extension at the named location and at the scale described by the City (approximately 18-24 inches). The location indicated by City staff is not a pedestrian crossing point, so unlike the extension at the intersection of Court Street and Court Square, this requested change would not

reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts. Furthermore, there is ample pedestrian space in the adjacent Washington Mall, in addition to an existing sidewalk which is approximately 9 feet wide; which is consistent with the remainder of the block to the west of the Washington Mall. While such a curb extension would create some additional sidewalk space, it would require significant disruption to infrastructure (including sewer and telecommunications) for a very limited increase in pedestrian area. The University remains committed to working with the BDPA and BTB to address concerns related to comfort and safety through the most effective and efficient means possible at the 1 Court Street site through other approaches.

Comment 1.9

BPDA staff encourage Suffolk to consider options such as opening the gallery for extended hours to the public, developing regular public programming in the evenings and weekends, and/or allowing for free or reduced-price use of the space for artist-led community events. A combination of these options or others will encourage a similar level of activation to the previous retail use and aid in providing useful resources to the community and Suffolk students.

Response

Refer to Section 4.2.1 of Chapter 4, *Proposed Future Projects*, in the 2020 IMP for more details. The University concurs with BPDA's suggestions regarding continued activation of the space at a level equal to, or greater than, the previous retail use. As it has done in many other spaces on its campus, Suffolk University will coordinate with the community and the City to make ground floor areas available for community use. The University will also support local artists in addition to students by periodically providing exhibition or event space to unaffiliated groups, in accordance with the University's policies for such uses. Additionally, extended hours for public usage, public programming in the evening, and free or discounted use for artist-led community events will all be included in strategies for ensuring that the ground floor space continues to be an active and vital part of the surrounding neighborhood.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Edward Carmody, Project Assistant
FROM: BPDA Planning Staff
DATE: October 28, 2019
SUBJECT: Suffolk University
Institutional Master Plan Notification Form
1 Court Street Residence Hall Project Notification Form

Institutional Master Plan Comments

Suffolk University proposes an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) update along with a new Article 80 large project, the conversion of the Ames Hotel to the 1 Court Street Residence Hall. The Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP/NF) and Project Notification Form (PNF) were filed on September 26, 2019.

BPDA staff appreciate the meetings we have had to this point with the proponent and look forward to continuing this dialogue as the projects develop. Comments are offered on the IMP and on the proposed project. An IMP is a useful vehicle for understanding an institution's long term goals and aspirations. It is also an opportunity to address issues that may benefit from longer term thinking and from outside input. For Suffolk University the focus of this discussion will likely be the plan for increasing on campus housing.

1 Court Street Residence Hall Comments

Urban Design

The Ames Building is one of Boston's most significant, which is noted in its designation as a City of Boston Landmark. It is one of the tallest load-bearing stone buildings in the United States. Furthermore, it is much beloved by residents and visitors for its uniquely beautiful form and entrance hall. It is exciting that such a wonderful resource has been acquired by Suffolk University so that it can be maintained for its students for years to come. The addition of a residence hall so close to the core campus is also clearly a benefit to the University and its students.

Signage for this building should be considered as part of the wider campus signage program, taking into account the unusually significant nature of this building. Because of the historic nature of the building, banner signage is not appropriate. Understanding that there is an interest in conveying to the public and students that the 1 Court Street Residence Hall is part of the University, creative ideas are welcome. Focusing on the ground floor windows is one place to start, as they offer good visibility and are often used for effective vinyl signage (while not blocking the view to the interior). Additionally, the awnings on the Washington Mall side of the building could be replaced with a solid, dark color (Suffolk University blue for example) with the name of the university on the free edge. BPDA Urban Design staff encourage the University to meet early with Boston Landmarks Commission staff and the BPDA to come to a good signage proposal.

1.1

1.2

Site design

For the 1 Court Street Residence, note that the area of Washington Mall adjacent to the Ames Building, including the granite terrace, is owned by the Boston Planning and Development Agency. Suffolk University will need to enter into a licensing agreement with the BPDA for the use of this area.

1.3

Many of the changes made by the Cultivar restaurant were to be removed when the restaurant closed. That has not happened so we offer our best suggestions for how the University can move forward in this area.

- Retain the planters and seasonal plantings to hide the numerous penetrations to the granite. Alternately, remove the planters and railings and then repair the granite. 1.4
- Remove the large, wood clad growing container to reestablish connectivity from the north of Washington Mall. Restore the steps on that side and replace the handrail to match the guardrails.
- Remove the structure of the unapproved freestanding Cultivar sign on Washington Mall.

Transportation

- Continue to work with the BPDA and BTM to determine the appropriate adjustments to the existing curbside regulations in front of the site (which is currently a valet zone) 1.5
- Continue to work with the City to refine the currently proposed bike parking room from a design and capacity perspective. In-room accommodations can also be considered. 1.6
- Contribute to the expansion of nearby BlueBikes facilities 1.7
- A new curb extension was recently installed at the end of the block at the existing Court St/Court Sq crosswalk. Additional curb extensions should be strongly considered to improve the public realm/pedestrian conditions at the Washington St end of the block to formalize and protect curb side operations and prevent moving through vehicles from using the curb side lane. 1.8

10 West Street Comments

BPDA staff understands that Suffolk University intends to convert the ground floor retail space located at 515 Washington Street (located within 10 West Street) into an art gallery space for the College of Arts and Sciences. The conversion of this storefront into a gallery space is admirable for its intent to support the goals for the College of Arts and Sciences, provide an opportunity of Suffolk students to interact with the Downtown Community, and continue to activate street frontage along Washington Street. BPDA staff encourage Suffolk to consider options such as opening the gallery for extended hours to the public, developing regular public programming in the evenings and weekends, and/or allowing for free or reduced-price use of the space for artist-led community events. A combination of these options or others will encourage a similar level of activation to the previous retail use and aid in providing useful resources to the community and Suffolk students. 1.9

1.5 Letter 2: BPDA Transportation & Infrastructure Planning

Comment 2.1

We ask that any project within the scope of this IMP over 50,000 square feet that involves new construction or significant utility work fill out the parts of the Checklist that apply to that project (check the Policy and Policy Summary on our website).

Response

Work on 1 Court Street Residence Hall will be mostly interior improvements, to convert a former hotel use to dormitory. There will be minimal utility work done. As such, the Smart Utilities Checklist is not applicable to the Project.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Edward Carmody, Project Manager
FROM: John (Tad) Read, Senior Deputy Director for Transportation & Infrastructure Planning
Manuel Esquivel, Senior Infrastructure & Energy Planning Fellow
Ryan Walker, Smart Utilities Program - Associate
DATE: October 28, 2019
SUBJECT: Suffolk University - **Smart Utilities Comments – IMPNF**

Summary:

In order to facilitate the review of integration of the Smart Utility Technologies (SUTs) and the Smart Utility Standards (SUS) into new Article 80 Developments, the BPDA and the Smart Utilities Steering Committee has put together a [Smart Utilities Checklist](#) that can be filled out and updated during the project review process. We ask that any project within the scope of this IMP over 50,000 square feet that involves new construction or significant utility work fill out the parts of the Checklist that apply to that project (check the Policy and Policy Summary on our [website](#)). This [template](#) can be used to organize information before submitting the [Smart Utilities Checklist](#). Please include the copy of the PDF document generated after submission of the Smart Utilities Checklist in any associated BPDA filing. Any diagrams should be submitted to Manuel Esquivel (manuel.esquivel@boston.gov). Let us know if the project team would like to schedule a meeting to go over any aspects of the Smart Utilities Policy.

2.1

Context:

On June 14, 2018 the BPDA Board adopted the [Smart Utilities Policy for Article 80 Development Review](#). The policy (attached) calls for the incorporation of five (5) Smart Utility Technologies (SUTs) into new Article 80 developments. Table 1 describes these five (5) SUTs. Table 2 summarizes the key provisions and requirements of the policy, including the development project size thresholds that would trigger the incorporation of each SUT.

In general, conversations about and review of the incorporation of the applicable SUTs into new Article 80 developments will be carried out by the BPDA and City staff during every stage (as applicable) of the review and permitting process, including a) prefile stage; b) initial filing; c) Article 80 development review prior to BPDA Board approval; d) prior to filing an application for a Building Permit; and e) prior to filing an application for a Certificate of Occupancy.

In conjunction with the SUTs contemplated in the *Smart Utilities Policy*, the BPDA and City staff will review the installation of SUTs and related infrastructure in right-of-ways in accordance with the *Smart Utility Standards* (“SUS”). The SUS set forth guidelines for planning and integration of SUTs with existing utility infrastructure in existing or new streets, including cross-section, lateral, and intersection diagrams. The *Smart Utility Standards* are intended to serve as guidelines for developers, architects, engineers, and utility providers for planning, designing, and locating utilities.

In order to facilitate the review of integration of the SUTs and the SUS, the BPDA and the Smart Utilities Steering Committee has put together a *Smart Utilities Checklist* that can be filled out and updated during the review process. Please fill out the parts of the *Checklist* that apply to your project. Make sure to review this *template* first, before submitting the *Smart Utilities Checklist*.

After submission, you will receive:

1. A confirmation email with a PDF of your completed checklist. Please include a copy of this document with your next filing with the BPDA.
2. A separate email with a link to update your initial submission. Please use ONLY this link for updating the Checklist associated with a specific project.

Note: Any documents submitted via email to Manuel.Esquivel@Boston.gov will not be attached to the PDF form generated after submission, but are available upon request.

The *Smart Utilities Policy for Article 80 Development Review*, the *Smart Utility Standards*, the *Smart Utilities Checklist*, and further information regarding the *Boston Smart Utilities Vision* project are available on the project’s website: <http://www.bostonplans.org/smart-utilities>.

Manuel Esquivel, BPDA Senior Infrastructure and Energy Planning Fellow, will soon follow up to schedule a meeting with the proponent to discuss the *Smart Utilities Policy*. For any questions, you can contact Manuel Esquivel at manuel.esquivel@boston.gov or 617.918.4382.

Table 1 - Summary description of 5 Smart Utility Technologies (SUTs) included in the *Smart Utilities Policy for Article 80 Development Review*

Smart Utility Technology (SUTs)	Summary Description
District Energy Microgrid	Energy system for clusters of buildings. Produces electricity on development site and uses excess “heat” to serve heating/cooling needs. By combining these two energy loads, the energy efficiency of fuel consumed is increased. The system normally operates connected to main electric utility grid, but can disconnect (“island”) during power outages and continue providing electric/heating/cooling needs to end-users.
Green Infrastructure	Infrastructure that allows rainwater to percolate into the ground. Can prevent storm runoff and excessive diversion of stormwater into the water and sewer system.
Adaptive Signal Technology	Smart traffic signals and sensors that communicate with each other to make multimodal travel safer and more efficient.
Smart Street Lights	Traditional light poles that are equipped with smart sensors, wifi,

	cameras, etc. for health, equity, safety, traffic management, and other benefits.
Telecom Utilidor	An underground duct bank used to consolidate the wires and fiber optics installed for cable, internet, and other telecom services. Access to the duct bank is available through manholes. Significantly reduces the need for street openings to install telecom services.

Table 2 - Summary of size threshold and other specifications for the 5 SUTs advanced in the Smart Utilities Policy for Article 80 Development Review (Note: This table is only for informational purposes. Please refer to the complete Smart Utilities Policy for Article 80 Development Review to review the details.)

	Article 80 Size Threshold	Other specifications
District Energy Microgrid	>1.5 million SF	Feasibility Assessment; if feasible, then Master Plan & District Energy Microgrid-Ready design
Green Infrastructure	>100,000 SF	Install to retain 1.25" rainfall on impervious areas (Increase from 1" currently required by BWSC)
Adaptive Signal Technology	All projects requiring signal installation or improvements	Install AST & related components into the traffic signal system network
Smart Street Lights	All Projects requiring street light installation or improvements	Install additional electrical connection & fiber optics at pole
Telecom Utilidor	>1.5 million SF of development, or >0.5 miles of roadway	Install Telecom Utilidor

1.6 Letter 3: Boston Water and Sewer Commission (re: Institutional Master Plan)

***This comment letter focuses on details specific to the 2020 IMP. For responses to this comment letter, please refer to Chapter 11, Response to Comments of the 2020 IMP.*

1.7 Letter 4: Boston Water and Sewer Commission (re: 1 Court Street PNF)

Comment 4.1

Based on the level of detail provided in the PNF, the Commission is unable to determine if a site plan is required for the proposed conversion of the hotel to student housing. The developer and the design team is required to meet with the Engineering Customer Services Department to review conceptual designs of the suite style rooms, alterations to the internal and external plumbing and the ground floor renovations.

Response

The Project Team met with a representative of the Boston Water and Sewer Commission on January 13, 2020, to further discuss and clarify the Project's proposed development program. As a result, BWSC agreed that the Project does not present any substantial improvements, simply a change of use from hotel to student dormitory.

Comment 4.2

If the Commission determines a site plan is required, Suffolk University will be required to prepare the site plan in strict accordance with the Commission's Water Distribution System and Sewer Use regulations, and Requirements for Site Plans. Site plan approval will include requirements to retain, on site, a volume of runoff equal to 1.25 inches of rainfall times the impervious area and directing the stormwater to the groundwater table for recharge.

Response

Based on the Project Team's discussion with BWSC representatives on January 13, 2020, no further action is required.

**Boston Water and
Sewer Commission**



980 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02119-2540
617-989-7000

October 23, 2019

Mr. Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Suffolk University, Residence Hall
1 Court Street
Project Notification Form

Dear Mr. Carmody:

The Boston Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) has reviewed the Project Notification Form (PNF) for the proposed conversion of the Ames Building, located at 1 Court Street, to provide on-campus student housing for Suffolk University students. This letter provides the Commission's comments on the PNF.

The project proposed by Suffolk University consist of converting the existing, 102,073 gross square foot fourteen story building, from a hotel to student housing. The conversion, when complete, will have 114 suite style rooms containing 266 to 280 beds. The project site and building will remain the same except for furniture replacement, security improvements and minor cosmetic upgrades to the building exterior. The building ground floor will have retail/food services area, student lounge and a reception area.

For water service, the Commission owns and maintains a 16-inch pit cast iron water main in Court Street. This water main was installed in 1904 and cleaned and cement lined in 1988. Washington Mall has two water mains. The 16-inch cast iron main was installed in 1948 and the 24-inch dead end ductile iron cement lined main was installed in 1982. The 16-inch water main is part of the Commission's Southern High Pressure Zone. The 24-inch main is part of the Commission's Southern Low Pressure Zone.

For Sewer Service Court Street and Washington Mall has a 12-inch combined sewer. Court Street also has a 15-inch combined sewer on the opposite side of Court Street

The PNF states that water demand will decrease from 4,370,000 gallons per year (gpy) to 3,835,000 gpy and wastewater generation will decrease from 3,660,000 gpy to 3,355,000 gpy.



Based on the level of detail provided in the PNF is the Commission unable to determine if a site plan is required for the proposed conversion of the hotel to student housing. The developer and the design team is required to meet with the Engineering Customer Services Department to review conceptual designs of the suite style rooms, alterations to the internal and external plumbing and the ground floor renovations. If the Commission determines a site plan is required, Suffolk University will be required to prepare the site plan in strict accordance with the Commission's Water Distribution System and Sewer Use regulations, and Requirements for Site Plans. Site plan approval will include requirements to retain, on site, a volume of runoff equal to 1.25 inches of rainfall times the impervious area and directing the stormwater to the groundwater table for recharge.

4.1

4.2

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Yours truly,

John P. Sullivan, P.E.
Chief Engineer

JPS/RJA

C: J. Nucci, Suffolk University
M. Zlody, BED
K. Ronan, MWRA
C. McGuire
P. Larocque, BWSC

1.8 Letter 5: Beacon Hill Civic Association

Comment 5.1

The BHCA is very supportive of this Project, and applauds Suffolk's efforts to increase the proportion of its students that live in university-managed residential housing that this Project will accomplish.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment 5.2

The BHCA believes that Suffolk should take this unique housing opportunity and use the Project space at One Court Street to maximize the number of residential student beds that can be included in the building.

Response

The University intends to maximize the number of student beds included in the 1 Court Street Residence Hall in accordance with relevant code requirements and city and public comment during the Article 80 review process. With regard to the ground floor space, the majority of input received from the City of Boston and the community to date has called for active and vibrant uses, including a continued restaurant use for the public on the Washington Mall-side of the building.

The University intends to utilize the second floor at 1 Court Street for meeting space to help alleviate the current shortage of such space across its campus. In addition to institutional uses, the meeting space will be made available to community groups.

Comment 5.3

...with respect to the first floor use, we believe that proposed use of approximately 1,512 square feet of retail/restaurant/café space, and approximately 708 square feet of student lounge space, would be better utilized instead as student housing rooms... At a minimum, perhaps the space can be used for a small student focused café, with the remaining space being dedicated to student housing use.

Response

The University intends to maximize the number of student beds included in the 1 Court Street Residence Hall in accordance with relevant code requirements and city and public comment during the Article 80 review process. With regard to the ground floor space, the majority of input received from the City of Boston and the community to date has called for active and vibrant uses, including a continued restaurant use for the public on the Washington Mall-side of the building.

The University intends to utilize the second floor at 1 Court Street for meeting space to help alleviate the current shortage of such space across its campus. In addition to institutional uses, the meeting space will be made available to community groups.

Comment 5.4

... a better use of the proposed student lounge space on the first floor would be for additional student housing rooms. In addition, it appears that Suffolk is still exploring other potential uses of some of the space available on the third through fourteen floors of the Project building. We suggest that the space on these floors be maximized for use as student housing rooms where possible.

Response

The University intends to maximize the number of student beds included in the 1 Court Street Residence Hall in accordance with relevant code requirements and city and public comment during the Article 80 review process. With regard to the ground floor space, the majority of input received from the City of Boston and the community to date has called for active and vibrant uses, including a continued restaurant use for the public on the Washington Mall-side of the building.

The University intends to utilize the second floor at 1 Court Street for meeting space to help alleviate the current shortage of such space across its campus. In addition to institutional uses, the meeting space will be made available to community groups.

Comment 5.5

Immediately after the public meeting, there was a brief discussion among Suffolk and BHCA representatives concerning the possible use and development of the Court Street-facing roof area of the NECHV building into an outdoor green space for use by students and veterans alike. We applaud this possible development of the currently unused roof area of the NECHV building as a great addition to the outdoor space in the downtown area.

Response

The University will consider utilization of the roof space of the abutting building (New England Center and Home for Veterans), however there do exist factors which may prove to be prohibitive. The creation of an exit/entrance to the NECHV roof would require a significant alternation to the building's historic façade. In addition, an initial review of the NECHV roof space shows a considerable amount of space currently being utilized for NECHV building mechanical uses.

Comment 5.6

Also, in 2008, during the IMP process at that time, Suffolk represented that its goal was to be able to house 50% of its undergraduate students eligible for Suffolk housing within ten years, 60% of its undergraduate students eligible for Suffolk housing within

fifteen years and 70% of its undergraduate students eligible for Suffolk housing within twenty (20) years. Suffolk still has a long way to go to achieve that goal, and we believe that the proposed new residence hall at One Court Street will help in heading Suffolk in that direction. In light of these goals, the BHCA believes that Suffolk should maximize the number of student housing rooms that will be included in the Project building as noted above.

Response

The University currently houses 30% of its Boston campus undergraduate population. The opening of the 1 Court Street Residence Hall and the discontinued use of 1047 Commonwealth Avenue in Brighton will maintain that level.

The University has a goal of guaranteeing 2 years of housing for entering first-year students and to house at least 50% of its Boston campus undergraduate population. The University will however continue to aggressively seek additional residential housing opportunities both in proximity to our downtown campus and in public transit-oriented locations within the city. These efforts may result in housing percentages higher than the stated goal of 50%, which should be considered a floor rather than a ceiling for the next 10 years.

Refer to Section 2.6 of Chapter 2, *Mission and Objectives* in the 2020 IMP for more details.

Comment 5.7

We believe that it is important for Suffolk to renew its original commitment made in 2008, as noted above, and that it seek to house 60% of its undergraduate students by 2025 and 70% of its undergraduate students by 2030. In this regard, as part of this IMP, we believe that Suffolk should outline a strategy for achieving the goal of housing 70% of its undergraduate students by 2030, including possible locations for such housing and methods that might be utilized to achieve this goal, including partnering with other schools and private developers.

Response

The University has a goal of guaranteeing 2 years of housing for entering first-year students and to house at least 50% of its Boston campus undergraduate population. The University will however continue to aggressively seek additional residential housing opportunities both in proximity to our downtown campus and in public transit-oriented locations within the city. These efforts may result in housing percentages higher than the stated goal of 50%, which should be considered a floor rather than a ceiling for the next 10 years.

Refer to Section 2.6 of Chapter 2, *Mission and Objectives* in the 2020 IMP for more details.

Comment 5.8

We believe that Suffolk should seek additional athletic facilities during the 10-year period of this IMP.

Response

Identification of an indoor athletic facility, including a NCAA regulation basketball court facility, remains one of the university's ongoing needs. We are regularly monitoring and exploring possibilities in the downtown area.

Future use of the Ridgeway building will occur in accordance with the terms of the 2008 Agreement with the Beacon Hill Civic Association as well as needs and priorities as established by the City of Boston.

Comment 5.9

In this regard, the BHCA believes that as part of the IMP, Suffolk should outline a strategy for achieving the goal of obtaining a NCAA Division 3 regulation basketball court facility in a location other than Beacon Hill, where it currently has a basketball court, either by entering into an agreement with the City of Boston to use one of its municipally-owned basketball court facilities, or explore partnering with another academic institution to share their basketball court facility, or build a new athletic facility that would contain such a basketball court facility, perhaps at the City of Boston-owned athletic facilities near the airport in East Boston.

Response

Identification of an indoor athletic facility, including an NCAA regulation basketball court facility, remains one of the university's ongoing needs. We are regularly monitoring and exploring possibilities in the downtown area.

Future use of the Ridgeway building will occur in accordance with the terms of the 2008 Agreement with the Beacon Hill Civic Association as well as needs and priorities as established by the City of Boston.

Comment 5.10

The BHCA believes that Suffolk should endeavor to locate an existing, or to construct a NCAA Division 3 regulation basketball court facility at some other location, so that the Ridgeway Lane building can be put to a better use, ideally one with a public purpose, such as a public school or affordable housing.

Response

Future use of the Ridgeway building will occur in accordance with the terms of the 2008 Agreement with the Beacon Hill Civic Association as well as needs and priorities as established by the City of Boston.



*Neighbors
Helping
Neighbors*

74 Joy Street
Boston
MA 02114
617.227.1922
info@bhcivic.org
www.bhcivic.org

BY EMAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

October 25, 2019

Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Re: Suffolk University Institutional Master Plan/Project Notification Form – Comments of the Beacon Hill Civic Association

Dear Mr. Carmody:

Since 1922, the Beacon Hill Civic Association (“BHCA”) has strived to preserve and enhance the quality of residential life on Beacon Hill. In this regard, we very much appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to the Boston Planning & Development Agency on the proposed Institutional Master Plan (“IMP”) for Suffolk University (“Suffolk”) dated September 2019, as well as on Suffolk’s Project Notification Form (“PNF”) dated September 2019, concerning Suffolk’s proposal to convert the building currently occupied by the Ames Hotel at One Court Street into student residential housing (the “Project”).

Comments on the PNF for the One Court Street Residence Hall

The BHCA is very supportive of this Project, and applauds Suffolk’s efforts to increase the proportion of its students that live in university-managed residential housing that this Project will accomplish. We also believe that the Project’s location on Court Street is very appropriate, in that the new residence hall will be close to the location of Suffolk’s academic buildings, but will not result in Suffolk’s students crossing over residential Beacon Hill when travelling between the proposed residence hall on Court Street and classes.

5.1

Also, the location of the Project on Court Street near the intersection with Washington Street will help to continue the shift of the Suffolk campus away from residential Beacon Hill and towards the downtown area and along Tremont Street. It has been the BHCA’s long term objective to limit and reverse the displacement of families and other residents in Beacon Hill dwelling units and in limiting the noise and

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other nuisances associated with undergraduate students living in unsupervised housing. We believe that the development of the Project at One Court Street will help towards the accomplishment of this objective.

With respect to the particulars of the Project, in the PNF, Suffolk states that the Project “consists of converting the existing building from hotel use to student housing, providing students with suite-style rooms containing approximately 266 to 280 beds.” PNF at 1.4. Suffolk further states that the Project will help replace the supply of on-campus housing beds once the lease of 1047 Commonwealth Avenue residences [currently housing Suffolk students] terminates in May 2020.” PNF at 1.4. Suffolk notes that the “net change to the housing inventory will maintain the current ratio of FTE undergraduate students housed at approximately 30 percent.” PNF at 1.4.

In the PNF, Suffolk further states that the approximately 102,073 gross square foot building will primarily serve as student housing, with “support spaces for various student activities, campus meeting, and events.” PNF at 1.4.1. Suffolk proposes that the space include 114 student dorm rooms that would contain approximately 266 to 280 student beds. In addition, Suffolk proposes that the Project space include approximately 2,200 square feet of active ground floor space, including approximately 1512 square feet of retail/restaurant/café space, and approximately 708 square feet of student lounge space. PNF at 1.4.1. We have also been informed that Suffolk intends to use the entirety of the second floor of the building for conference space.

The BHCA believes that Suffolk should take this unique housing opportunity and use the Project space at One Court Street to maximize the number of residential student beds that can be included in the building.

5.2

For example, we believe that the entirety of the second floor of the building should be used for student housing rooms, and not for conference space. Suffolk already has ample conference room space located in its nearby buildings, including 73 Tremont Street, 120 Tremont Street and 20 Somerset Street, among other locations

In addition, with respect to the first floor use, we believe that proposed use of approximately 1512 square feet of retail/restaurant/café space, and approximately 708 square feet of student lounge space, would be better utilized instead as student housing rooms. There is no great need for including the proposed retail/restaurant/café space in this building, particularly when there are already numerous restaurants and cafes in the immediate area, and inasmuch as the use of this space in the past for restaurant use has never been particularly successful. At a minimum, perhaps the space can be used for a small student-focused café, with the remaining space being dedicated to student housing use.

5.3

With respect to the proposed student lounge space on the first floor, we have been informed that Suffolk intends to include other lounge spaces on the certain of the various residential housing floors. As such, a better use of the proposed student lounge space on the first floor would be for additional student housing rooms. In addition, it appears that Suffolk is still exploring other potential uses of some of the space available on the third through fourteen floors of the Project building. We suggest that the space on these floors be maximized for use as student housing rooms where possible.

5.4

Also, during the recent public meeting of the Suffolk IMP Task Force, Suffolk noted that it was working closely with the New England Center and Home for Veterans (“NECHV”), located at 17 Court Street and immediately adjacent to the Project, as Suffolk proceeds forward with the Project. Immediately after the public meeting, there was a brief discussion among Suffolk and BHCA representatives concerning the

5.5

possible use and development of the Court Street-facing roof area of the NECHV building into an outdoor green space for use by students and veterans alike. We applaud this possible development of the currently unused roof area of the NECHV building as a great addition to the outdoor space in the downtown area.

5.5 (cont.)

Also, in 2008, during the IMP process at that time, Suffolk represented that its goal was to be able to house 50% of its undergraduate students eligible for Suffolk housing within ten years, 60% of its undergraduate students eligible for Suffolk housing within fifteen years and 70% of its undergraduate students eligible for Suffolk housing within twenty (20) years. Suffolk still has a long way to go to achieve that goal, and we believe that the proposed new residence hall at One Court Street will help in heading Suffolk in that direction. In light of these goals, the BHCA believes that Suffolk should maximize the number of student housing rooms that will be included in the Project building as noted above.

5.6

Comments on the Proposed IMP

The BHCA supports Suffolk's proposed IMP. We do, however, have several suggested comments. In the IMP, Suffolk states that in the 2008 IMP, it committed to a target of housing 50% of its students by 2018. IMP at 8.4. Suffolk further states that for the 2020 IMP, it will "renew its commitment to this target." IMP at 4.3.2 and 8.4. We believe that it is important for Suffolk to renew its original commitment made in 2008, as noted above, and that it seek to house 60% of its undergraduate students by 2025 and 70% of its undergraduate students by 2030. In this regard, as part of this IMP, we believe that Suffolk should outline a strategy for achieving the goal of housing 70% of its undergraduate students by 2030, including possible locations for such housing and methods that might be utilized to achieve this goal, including partnering with other schools and private developers.

5.7

In the proposed IMP, Suffolk states that it currently uses City of Boston-owned athletic facilities near the airport in East Boston under a lease for baseball, softball and soccer. IMP at 3.3. Suffolk further states that it anticipates renewing the lease with the City at the end of its term, and that "[no] additional off-campus athletic facility needs have been identified at this time. IMP at 3.3. We believe that Suffolk should seek additional athletic facilities during the 10 year period of this IMP.

5.8

In this regard, the BHCA believes that as part of the IMP, Suffolk should outline a strategy for achieving the goal of obtaining a NCAA Division 3 regulation basketball court facility in a location other than Beacon Hill, where it currently has a basketball court, either by entering into an agreement with the City of Boston to use one of its municipally-owned basketball court facilities, or explore partnering with another academic institution to share their basketball court facility, or build a new athletic facility that would contain such a basketball court facility, perhaps at the City of Boston-owned athletic facilities near the airport in East Boston.

5.9

Under its 2008 agreement with the BHCA, Suffolk agreed to vacate its existing academic building on Ridgeway Lane on Beacon Hill, which currently houses a NCAA Division 3 regulation basketball court facility, at such a time as when Suffolk obtains the use of another NCAA Division 3 regulation basketball court facility. The BHCA believes that Suffolk should endeavor to locate an existing, or to construct a NCAA Division 3 regulation basketball court facility at some other location, so that the Ridgeway Lane building can be put to a better use, ideally one with a public purpose, such as a public school or affordable housing.

5.10

Edward Carmody
October 25, 2019
Page 4

Thank you for your consideration of these comments from the BHCA concerning Suffolk's PNF for the One Court Street Residence Hall and the IMP.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eve Waterfall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "W".

Eve Waterfall
Chair

cc: John Nucci, Suffolk University
Senator Joseph Boncore
Senator Sal DiDemenico
Representative Jay Livingstone
Representative Aaron Michlewitz
Councilor Josh Zakim
Councilor Edward Flynn
Councilor Michael Flaherty
Councilor Michelle Wu
Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George
Councilor Althea Garrison

1.9 Letter 6: Boston Preservation Alliance

Comment 6.1

We would like to bring attention to one element that remains to be resolved. Though we understand Suffolk's need to brand their building and provide wayfinding for students and guests, we hesitate to embrace the standard vertical blade signs as proposed and that mark many Suffolk buildings. The scale and location of these signs might obstruct the architectural expression and character of the building's design and we urge the execution of signage to be deferent to the historic building at all times. We encourage all other options for signage to be explored.

Response

Since the filing of the IMPNF and the 1 Court Street PNF, the University has met with representatives from BPDA, Boston Landmarks Commission and Boston Preservation Alliance regarding proposed signage. The University has worked with its Project Team to incorporate feedback from these agencies where feasible. Design review with the Boston Landmarks Commission is scheduled for January 28, 2020.

BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

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Executive Director
Gregory J. Galer, Ph.D.

October 25, 2019

Mr. Edward Carmody
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201
Re: One Court Street, Suffolk University

Dear Mr. Carmody

The Boston Preservation Alliance is Boston’s primary, non-profit advocacy organization that protects and promotes the use of historic buildings and landscapes in all of the city’s neighborhoods. With 39 Organizational Members, 143 Corporate Members, and a reach of 35,000 friends and supporters we represent a diverse constituency advocating for the thoughtful evolution of the city and celebration of its unique character. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on projects that impact the historic character of the city.

The Alliance has met with leadership at Suffolk University to discuss the conversion of One Court Street, also known as the Ames Building, to student dormitories. As a Boston Landmark, this building is both incredibly historic and a prominent architectural statement in the heart of downtown Boston. It is crucial that any modifications to this building be sensitive and appropriate. Through our conversation it is clear that Suffolk recognizes and plans to honor the history and be good stewards of this building. We are confident that Suffolk’s intentions for the project, guided by the Boston Landmarks Commission, will result in a successful transition of use and a more vibrant streetscape for pedestrians.

We would like to bring attention to one element that remains to be resolved. Though we understand Suffolk’s need to brand their building and provide wayfinding for students and guests, we hesitate to embrace the standard vertical blade signs as proposed and that mark many Suffolk buildings. The scale and location of these signs might obstruct the architectural expression and character of the building’s design and we urge the execution of signage to be deferent to the historic building at all times. We encourage all other options for signage to be explored.

6.1

Otherwise, the Alliance fully supports this project and Suffolk's stewardship of the historic Ames Building at One Court Street.

Sincerely,



Greg Galer
Executive Director

CC:

Rosanne Foley, Boston Landmarks Commission
Brona Simon, Massachusetts Historical Commission
John Nucci, Suffolk University

Harvey Leong
1 Avery Street
Unit 21A
Boston, MA 02111

September 30, 2019

Mr. Edward Carmody
BPDA

Subject: Support Letter for Suffolk University's One Court Residence Hall

As an active resident in the development of the Midtown Area, I have seen much change over the past 14 years. Through this period, I have developed a growing respect for the work that Suffolk University has done to be an active and very positive part of our community – especially in the development and operation of their dormitories.

I fully support the conversion of the Ames Hotel to a Residence Hall for Suffolk Students for the following reasons:

1. It will help ease the demand for rental housing in Midtown.
2. The Residence Hall will be a “controlled” environment and help to manage student activities – especially on weekends.
3. It will improve public safety of the immediate area.
4. As for alternative uses for the building, I am of the belief that this is not going to impact the hotel room supply, given the development of the many hotel projects. As for, affordable units in the Midtown/Chinatown area, I believe that this is not a suitable community site for affordable units. Note: I was a Board member of the Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC) and led its Finance Committee for a period of time.

This is a rare opportunity for Suffolk University and for Boston's Midtown Community.

Sincerely,



October 2019

Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Suffolk University 1 Court Street Residence Hall

Dear Mr. Carmody,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Suffolk University student residence hall at 1 Court Street. The project represents a unique opportunity that will allow Suffolk to increase on-campus housing for students.

The addition of approximately 280 student beds will have an immediate economic impact on all businesses in the downtown area. The increased foot traffic will also contribute to a more safe and vibrant pedestrian streetscape.

As a local business owner and/or operator we encourage you to act favorably on Suffolk's proposed residence hall. Local residents and area businesses alike will undoubtedly benefit. My below signature indicates my support for this great project.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin Curcio".

275 Washington Street Corp.

275 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

October 10, 2019

Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Suffolk University 1 Court Street Residence Hall

Dear Mr. Carmody,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Suffolk University student residence hall at 1 Court Street. As the owner of the Pi Alley Parking Garage Building, a neighbor of 1 Court Street, we are excited to see the addition of 280 student beds here. This will have an immediate economic impact in the entire Downtown Crossing neighborhood. We look forward to the increased foot traffic that will create a more vibrant and safer streetscape.

The project represents a unique opportunity that will allow Suffolk to increase on-campus housing for students and further the City's agenda of freeing up private units for Boston families. We believe that this project has the potential to be as successful as Suffolk's Modern Theater and 10 West Residence Halls.

We encourage you to act favorably on Suffolk's proposed residence hall. Residents and area businesses alike will undoubtedly benefit.

Best,



Doug Sickler
Managing Director

Cc: John Nucci

October 11, 2019

Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Suffolk University 1 Court Street Residence Hall

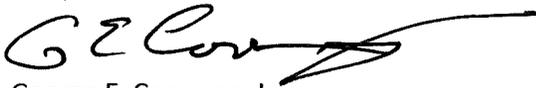
Dear Mr. Carmody,

I am writing to express my full support for the proposed Suffolk University student residence hall at 1 Court Street. The project represents a unique opportunity for the University to increase campus housing for their students in a university controlled setting, while freeing up housing units for families and residents.

Suffolk has been an important contributor to the transformation of Downtown Crossing. Renovations to the historic Modern Theatre and new student housing at 10 West and Modern Theatre Residence Hall has resulted in a safer and more vibrant pedestrian streetscape.

The University has consistently strived to be a good neighbor and strengthen community relations. We are proud to call Suffolk University our neighbor and partner and urge the approval of their plans as proposed.

Best,



George E. Coorssen, Jr.
Resident
151 Tremont St.
Boston, MA 02111



NEW ENGLAND CENTER
AND HOME FOR VETERANS

EDUCATION | SUPPORT | EMPLOYMENT | HOUSING

BRA

11 October 2019

Boston Redevelopment Authority, d/b/a
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

19 OCT 11 PM 1:27:30

Dear Boston Planning and Development Agency,

The New England Center and Home for Veterans (NECHV) is writing to provide its strongest and most enthusiastic support of Suffolk University's proposed plan to create student housing at 1 Court Street Residence Hall. As a direct abutter to the property and community partner to the University; the NECHV welcomes the addition of a Suffolk University student residence and is confident that this use of Boston's historic Ames Building will enhance the downtown Boston neighborhood. The Center staff has extensively reviewed the 1 Court Street Residence Hall, Project Notification Form, and met with the University's President and leadership team onsite to discuss the future of our very special Court Street location. We could not be more pleased with the prospect of having Suffolk University as a close neighbor and strong partner.

NECHV is one of the nation's leading providers of supportive services to Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Mission of the NECHV is to enable Veterans to achieve individual success and to live with dignity and independence. The Center lauds the efforts of Suffolk University to create additional student housing here in Boston. The increase in availability of student dormitories resulting from this project, will help to mitigate the existing shortage of available housing in Boston for the Veterans the NECHV serves. Veterans seeking appropriate housing here in Boston are many-time in direct competition for the same rental stock sought by college students. This proposal represents a strong WIN – WIN initiative for both University students and NECHV Veterans.

The NECHV's historic 17 Court Street building shares more than an adjoining structural wall with the Ames Building. Both building were designed by the architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge and helped define Boston's early 20th Century design character. The Center's newer 17 Court Street Building represents the architect's, and Boston's building's transition from masonry load-bearing structures to total steel structural frame building design. The two adjoining buildings are strong complements, and we are confident that the two missions and roles of the buildings now, will be equally complementary. The NECHV will work closely and collaboratively with Suffolk University.

I strongly encourage the Boston Planning and Development Agency to accept and approve Suffolk University's development plan for the 1 Court Street, Ames Building. The project will not only benefit its students and faculty, but the NECHV and the local community, as well. Thank you for your kind consideration of this letter. I am available at any time should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at _____ or _____.

Sincerely,

C. Andrew McCawley
President and Chief Executive Officer



Edward Carmody <edward.carmody@boston.gov>

RE: Suffolk University IMPNF/PNF Submission - TASK FORCE COMMENT

1 message

Ernani DeAraujo

Fri, Oct 25, 2019 at 9:39 AM

To: Edward Carmody <edward.carmody@boston.gov>

Hi Eddie. I write this note in support of Suffolk University's proposal for the former Ames Boston hotel. Creating managed living space for university students is a very good use for this building and will have multiple benefits for the city of Boston including: relieving pressure on nearby residential housing; providing students with a safe, up-to-code, living experience; and preserving an architecturally impressive facade that might otherwise fall into disrepair. The Suffolk team has been very thoughtful around managing impacts with respect to transportation and tenants. In particular, the adaptation for student use should relieve some traffic congestion from the area and the concentration of students in the building should liven up the nearby streetscape and promote further investment in that area.

Finally, Suffolk University has been a good neighbor and partner for the neighborhood of East Boston and I believe will be a good neighbor to the surrounding area on Court Street.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ernani J. DeAraujo, Esq.

Vice President of Regulatory Affairs and General Counsel

East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

20 Maverick Square, 4th Floor

East Boston, MA 02128

Office:

Fax:

From: Edward Carmody [mailto:edward.carmody@boston.gov]

Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 11:11 AM

To: Edward Carmody

Subject: Re: Please Review - Suffolk University IMPNF/PNF Submission

EXTERNAL Message From Edward Carmody with a return email address of edward.carmody@boston.gov

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



EAST BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL

PHILLIP R. BRANGIFORTE
HEADMASTER

Dear Mr. Carmody,

I would like to offer my wholehearted support of Suffolk University plans as outlined in both their recent Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMPNF) and One Court Street Project Notification Form (PNF). The university has shown great sensitivity and generosity to both East Boston High School (EBHS) and the East Boston Community at-large.

The partnership with EBHS at Memorial Stadium in East Boston has proven to be entirely positive and productive for the high school, the community, and the university and its students. I urge the city to encourage continuation of the arrangement.

The proposed One Court Street Residence Hall will provide much-needed university-sponsored student housing which will result in more East Boston students coming out of private apartments, thereby freeing up valuable units for families and East Boston residents.

We are proud to call Suffolk University our partner and urge approval of the university's plans as proposed.

Sincerely,

Phillip R. Brangiforte
Hadmaster

October 2019

Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

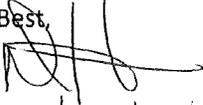
Re: Suffolk University 1 Court Street Residence Hall

Dear Mr. Carmody,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Suffolk University student residence hall at 1 Court Street. The project represents a unique opportunity that will allow Suffolk to increase on-campus housing for students.

The addition of approximately 280 student beds will have an immediate economic impact on all businesses in the downtown area. The increased foot traffic will also contribute to a more safe and vibrant pedestrian streetscape.

As a local business owner and/or operator we encourage you to act favorably on Suffolk's proposed residence hall. Local residents and area businesses alike will undoubtedly benefit. My below signature indicates my support for this great project.

Best,

Douglas Haigh
Pearle Vision owner/OD

October 2019

Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Suffolk University 1 Court Street Residence Hall

Dear Mr. Carmody,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Suffolk University student residence hall at 1 Court Street. The project represents a unique opportunity that will allow Suffolk to increase on-campus housing for students.

The addition of approximately 280 student beds will have an immediate economic impact on all businesses in the downtown area. The increased foot traffic will also contribute to a more safe and vibrant pedestrian streetscape.

As a local business owner and/or operator we encourage you to act favorably on Suffolk's proposed residence hall. Local residents and area businesses alike will undoubtedly benefit. My below signature indicates my support for this great project.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Myers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert MYERS
CEO, CO-OWNER
Boyaroo

October 2019

Edward Carmody
Project Assistant
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Suffolk University 1 Court Street Residence Hall

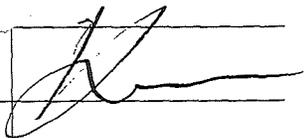
Dear Mr. Carmody,

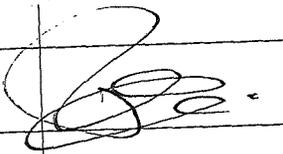
I am writing to express my support for the proposed Suffolk University student residence hall at 1 Court Street. The project represents a unique opportunity that will allow Suffolk to increase on-campus housing for students.

The addition of approximately 280 student beds will have an immediate economic impact on all businesses in the downtown area. The increased foot traffic will also contribute to a more safe and vibrant pedestrian streetscape.

As a local business owner and/or operator we encourage you to act favorably on Suffolk's proposed residence hall. Local residents and area businesses alike will undoubtedly benefit. My below signature indicates my support for this great project.

Best,

Bank of America	6 Tremont St.	KEVIN KAKOU	Relationship	
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Dunkin' Donuts	100 City Hall Plaza	Srijana Babami	Manager	
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Metro Credit Union	100 City Hall Plaza	Carlos Rodriguez	Branch Manager	
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Great Taste	100 City Hall Square	Mario	gda	
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APPENDIX 3
SAMPLE PUBLIC NOTICE

SAMPLE

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA), acting pursuant to Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code, hereby gives notice that an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) for Institutional Master Plan Review has been received from _____

(Name of Applicant)

for _____
(Brief Description of Project)

proposed at _____
(Location of Project)

The IMP may be reviewed or obtained at the Office of the Secretary of the BPDA Boston City Hall, Room 910, between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays. Public comments on the IMP, including the comments of public agencies, should be transmitted to Edward Carmody, Project Assistant, Boston Planning & Development Agency, Boston City Hall, Boston, MA 02201, within sixty (60) days of this notice or by _____. Approvals are requested of the BPDA pursuant to Article 80 for _____.

The BPDA shall issue an Adequacy Determination approving, conditionally approving, or disapproving the IMP pursuant to Section 80D-5.4(c)(iv) of the Boston Zoning Code.

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

APPENDIX A: Draft Construction Management Plan

Draft Construction Management Plan

Prior to the construction phase of the Project, the Construction Manager (CM) will prepare a Construction Management Plan (CMP), in compliance with the City of Boston's Construction Management requirements, and reflect the input of the regulatory authorities having jurisdiction over such plans, including the Boston Fire Department (BFD) and the Boston Transportation Department (BTD). The CMP will detail measures to ensure the maintenance of existing levels of services during the construction of the Project and to minimize disruption in the area.

Summarized below are several key measures which are anticipated to be undertaken during the construction phase of the Project.

- › The Proponent and the general contractor will coordinate with BTD regarding all transportation-related construction impacts of the Project.
- › Designated truck routes will be established to govern how trucks access the Project site.
- › Secure fencing will be provided in areas affected by construction to protect nearby pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Gate entrances into the construction area will be established to minimize impacts on adjacent ways. Additionally, signage and temporary crosswalk will be created, if needed, to redirect pedestrian traffic around the Project Site.
- › During construction activities, a police detail will be employed as necessary to manage pedestrian and vehicle traffic at the construction access to the Project Site.
- › Secure on-site storage will be provided for tools and equipment in an effort to minimize construction-related vehicle trips to the site.
- › Full or partial street closures will be avoided to the extent possible. Should a partial street closure be necessary in order to complete construction-related activities, the closure will be limited to off-peak periods as practical. Police details will be used as necessary to manage vehicle circulation. Prior to the implementation of any planned construction activities within the public right-of-way, the contractor will prepare a traffic and pedestrian management plan for public review.
- › The General Contractor (GC) will work with the TMA to implement appropriate measures to encourage ridesharing and the use of public transportation services by employees and subcontractors working on the Project.
- › The GC will be responsible for the reprocessing and recycling of construction waste. There will be specific requirements to ensure that construction procedures allow for segregation, reprocessing, reuse and recycling of materials. For materials that cannot be recycled, solid waste will be transported in covered trucks to an approved solid waste facility, in accordance with DEP Regulations for Solid Waste Facilities.

- › The GC will also adhere to measures aimed at reducing emission of fugitive dust and minimizing impacts on the local environment, including (but not limited to):
 - Application of wetting agents to control and suppress dust that may come from construction materials;
 - All trucks transporting construction debris to be tarped and their wheels cleaned before exiting the site; and
 - No storage of construction debris to be allowed on site.
- › Every reasonable effort to minimize noise impact from construction activities will be considered and implemented, including (but not limited to):
 - Use of appropriate mufflers on all equipment and on-going maintenance of intake and exhaust mufflers, and alternative items of equipment when possible (such as electric instead of diesel-powered equipment, hydraulic tools instead of pneumatic impact tools, etc.);
 - Turning off idling equipment;
 - Use less noisy specific construction operations and techniques where feasible (e.g., mixing concrete off-site instead of on-site); and
 - Scheduling equipment operations to keep average levels low, such as by synchronizing noisiest operations with times of highest ambient levels, and to maintain relatively uniform noise levels.