

August 12, 2010

**Dear NABB Members,**

We want to take this opportunity to let you know about the next steps and opportunity for public comment for the largest currently active development projects that NABB and our adjacent neighborhood associations are currently working: the Liberty Mutual Group project and the Christian Science Center Complex project.

**Liberty Mutual 157 Berkeley Street**

The Liberty Mutual project is within the Back Bay, adjacent to Bay Village and the South End, on two sides of Stuart Street, between Arlington and Berkeley Streets. The initial Project Notification Form is posted on the BRA website at:

[www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/DevelopmentProjects/PipeDocs/157%20Berkeley%20Street/PNF/157%20Berkeley%20Street\\_PNF.pdf](http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/DevelopmentProjects/PipeDocs/157%20Berkeley%20Street/PNF/157%20Berkeley%20Street_PNF.pdf)

NABB, along with our neighboring associations, has been participating in the review process of this project, as well as the related Stuart Street Study for several years. Our most recent actions have been to prepare written comments on the Project Notification Form report and to submit a follow-up letter to the BRA Director, as well as to prepare comments and a follow-up letter to the State Environment Department Secretary regarding a separate filing with the State on environmental impacts. Two NABB letters to the BRA are attached your information.

NABB's key concerns are the preservation of sunlight on the Boston Common and the proposed shadow, which is in conflict with the protection afforded by State law, and the introduction of a private bridge over Stuart Street, which is in conflict with urban planning guidelines in general and with the Boston Civic Design Commission's long standing guidelines for urban design. The Boston Common is one of the most widely used open spaces in the City and is deservedly protected from encroaching development. Private urban bridges are undesirable in any urban location, but are particularly unfriendly in a vibrant downtown area. Bridges remove the life from the public streets, the pedestrian activity that brings vitality and safety to an urban area. Bridges block the view corridors, which are important for pedestrian and vehicular flow alike to navigate in an urban area.

**BRA Board Meeting and Public Hearing regarding zoning changes**

The BRA Board has scheduled a Public Hearing for August 17, 2010 at 5:30 PM BRA Conference Room, 9th Floor, City Hall (after 5:30 pm enter from Congress Street, first floor level, rather than the third floor main entry). The public hearing precedes the anticipated BRA Board approval of the requested zoning changes to allow Liberty Mutual to construct the proposed project. This approval would recommend the Planned Development Area #79 Development Plan, as well as a related Boston Zoning Code text amendment and map amendment, regarding the 157 Berkeley Street project, and for such project to be considered a Development Impact Project, by the Liberty Mutual Group. (The BRA project manager advised that language for the BRA Board meeting will be posted on the BRA website.)

**Christian Science Center Complex**

NABB has submitted a letter to the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) in support of the designation of Landmark for the Christian Science Center Complex. Recently, when the

reflecting pool, the Sunday School, the tower, and the colonnade building reached 50 years of age, achieving eligibility for the status of a landmark, a number of individual citizens submitted an application to the Boston Landmarks Commission. NABB's letter of support, with no amendments to modify the decision, is attached for your information.

The BLC held a public hearing in July and decided to convene a subcommittee to further discuss the issue of landmarking the site. The first meeting, which is open to the public will be held on August 19, 2010 at 8:00 AM in the BRA Board Room, Boston City Hall. The Christian Science Study Report is posted online at [www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks](http://www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks). The report can be found in the right hand column under the heading "announcements".

### **Christian Science Center Complex Master Plan**

Related to the landmarking of the site, as reported in NABB News, as well as in the Globe, Sun, and Courant, the Christian Science Church has undertaken a study to plan new construction on its campus. The BRA convened a civic group, including business and residential members to meet on an ongoing basis with the Church to discuss the potential development of the site surrounding the Church. All meetings are open to the public. Generally public comments are invited at the end of the meetings, although clarifying questions are generally accepted throughout the meeting. The next meeting is September 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 AM. It will be held at the Christian Science Publishing House Building, 210 Massachusetts Avenue

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, the Church submitted their Draft Plaza Revitalization Plan Document. This is available online at [www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/Planning/PlanningInitsIndividual.asp?action=ViewInit&InitID=144](http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/Planning/PlanningInitsIndividual.asp?action=ViewInit&InitID=144). The zoning for the site, if averaged over the entire campus would allow for 650,000 square feet of construction. The proposal requests approval of one building on Huntington Avenue, at a height of 291 feet tall and 150,000 square feet and two buildings on Belvedere/Dalton Streets, one a Hi-rise at a height of 512 feet tall and 600,000 square feet and second building a Mid-rise at a height of 251 feet tall and 200,000 square feet of construction, for a total of 950,000 square feet of new construction

On Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> the BRA held a public meeting to discuss the Draft Plan Document. However, there is still time to comment. The NABB Development Committee anticipates working on comments in August. All written comments are requested in writing by Friday, September 3, 2010 to: Lauren Shurtleff, Boston Redevelopment Authority, 1 City Hall Square, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02201, [lauren.shurtleff.bra@cityofboston.gov](mailto:lauren.shurtleff.bra@cityofboston.gov)

NABB is interested in your thoughts, as well. We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding these projects. Please email to "NABB DC" [<info@nabbonline.com>](mailto:info@nabbonline.com) with the Subject Line including "Development Committee" by mail to the NABB office with your contact information.

Thank you for your support.  
Sincerely,

Jackie Yessian, Chair NABB Development Committee