



A Call to Action to Make Roszie the Most Walkable Neighborhood in Boston

February 26, 2021

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY (aisling.kerr@boston.gov)

Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201
Attention: Aisling Kerr, Project Manager

RE: Small Project Review – 4198 Washington Street, Roslindale, MA

Dear Ms. Kerr:

I write on behalf of WalkUP Roslindale to express our strong support for the application by Auros LLC for re-development of an 8,982 square-foot parcel at 4198-4206 Washington Street in Roslindale (the “**Proposed Project**”). According to the small project review application, the Proposed Project is “a mixed-use development comprised of a six-story building that will contain 39 residential units, approximately 4,500 square feet of retail, a community theater space, and 47 bike storage spaces. The foremost goal of the Project is to create income-restricted middle-income units in Roslindale where only 12% of the neighborhood’s housing stock is currently restricted (compared to the citywide average of 19%). The [Proposed] Project will utilize numerous alternative transit options including a transit wallet to subsidize public transportation and bicycle amenities rather than contain any on-site accessory parking spaces.”

Considering WalkUP Roslindale’s mission and approach (described in more detail below), we see this proposal as a win-win-win for Roslindale, the City of Boston, and those who live, work, and run businesses in and around Roslindale Square, including our present and future neighbors in need of income-restricted affordable housing. This Proposed Project will accomplish four important goals simultaneously:

- (1) providing for desperately-needed affordable housing in our neighborhood, city, and commonwealth, with respect to which we greatly appreciate the development team’s commitment to at least 40% of the Proposed Project’s units as income-restricted affordable units (more than 3 times the required amount) and we hope to hear more specifics on the income ranges at which these affordable units will be targeted (we hope as much toward the lower end of the income scale as possible);
- (2) rehabilitating an outdated one-story building that under-utilizes the valuable mixed-use parcel it occupies;
- (3) bringing more people, foot traffic, and business to one of Roslindale’s principal commercial districts; and

(4) demonstrating that a development like the Proposed Project can occur successfully with no on-site parking by taking advantage of the abundant and adjacent public transportation – including the Washington Street dedicated bus lane to Forest Hills immediately outside the building door as well as nearby MBTA commuter rail - and convenient active transportation facilities for walking and bicycling such as the well-used Blue Bikes stations.

In addition, we like the design of the building both in the proposed six stories, which will complement the adjacent equally tall Roslindale Community Center/Municipal Building, the stepped and setback architectural style, and the provision of indoor and outdoor space for commercial and public use. We believe that accommodating more residential units in this area of Roslindale without adding more motor vehicle traffic will help with the continuing success of Roslindale Square as a destination for shopping and entertainment activity, thus helping the nearby commercial businesses thrive and further develop. We also urge the development team to meet with and discuss ways to collaborate with the adjacent Charles Sumner School community, especially regarding cooperative use of the Rozzie Square Theatre space and the adjacent green/art wall.

We recognize that some of our neighbors may urge that the Proposed Project be modified to provide off-street parking. While we understand these suggestions are well-intentioned, it is our strong position that dedicating more land in our neighborhood to motor vehicle storage rather than housing for people is the last thing we need. Additional parking induces demand or, put otherwise, “if you build it, they will come.” Better management of Roslindale Square’s existing parking supply (e.g., with smart meters in the square and regular enforcement of other residential and commercial parking rules in the surrounding area) and enhancements to our bus and rail service are sustainable and durable solutions, while adding more parking just means more motor vehicles in the neighborhood (and thus traffic), at the cost of our quality of life, supply of affordable housing, and ultimately the climate of our planet.

Finally, as many of us frequent the businesses that currently are located in the existing building on the parcel, we applaud the developers for working to retain their businesses in the new building after it is erected. We will support this objective.

On the foregoing basis, I wish to reiterate our support for the Proposed Project. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to reviewing and commenting further as the Proposed Project continues to evolve through the development review process.

Sincerely yours,



Matthew Lawlor

Resident @ 15 Basto Terrace, Roslindale, on behalf of the WalkUP Roslindale Steering Group

Ricardo Austrich, Resident @ 843 South Street, Roslindale
Rachel Blumberg, Resident @ 15 Newburg Street, Apt. 2, Roslindale
Benjamin Bruno, Resident @ 27 Colgate Road, Roslindale
Devil Cole, Resident @ 169 Orange Street, Roslindale
Steve Gag, Resident @ 631 South Street, Roslindale
Liz Graham-Meredith, Resident @ 6 Crandall Street, Roslindale
Margaux Leonard, Resident @ 35 Harding Road, Roslindale
Mandana Moshtaghi, Resident @ 12 Arborough Road, Roslindale
Robert Orthman, Resident @ 31 Mendelssohn Street, #2, Roslindale
Kathryn Ostrofsky, Resident @ 74 Birch Street, Apt. 2, Roslindale
Adam Rogoff, Resident @ 28 Ashfield Street, Roslindale
Adam Rosi-Kessel, Resident @ 36 Taft Hill Terrace, Roslindale

Rachele Rosi-Kessel, Resident @ 36 Taft Hill Terrace, Roslindale
Adam Shutes, Resident @ 318 Metropolitan Avenue, Roslindale
Laura Smeaton, Resident @ 61 Cornell Street, Roslindale
Mark Tedrow, Resident @ 21 Conway Street, Roslindale
Marc Theiss, Resident @ 55 Prospect Avenue, Roslindale
Greg Tobin, Resident @ 1 Sheldon Street, Roslindale
Nick Ward, Resident @ 35 Harding Road, Roslindale
Alan Wright, Resident @ 98 Birch Street, Roslindale

About WalkUP Roslindale

WalkUP Roslindale, which takes its name from the international movement to foster “Walkable Urban Places,” is a collaborative group of residents dedicated to making Roslindale the most walkable neighborhood in Boston. We advocate for a dynamic, livable streetscape and we support positive changes to our public and private built environment that strengthen walkability and other forms of active mobility as means toward better personal and public health, safety, social capital, economic development, and environmental sustainability. We are led by a steering group of about thirty residents and have nearly 1,000 additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at www.walkuproslindale.org. We recognize that no single group of people can be said to speak for our entire neighborhood – instead, please take the above comments as representing the collective support of our steering group members (indicated above resulting from our mission and principles.

Copy to:

Mr. Joseph Coppinger, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services (joseph.coppinger@boston.gov)
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