



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

August 31, 2021

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

Boston Planning & Development Agency

One City Hall Square, 9th Floor

Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Attention: Ebony DaRosa, Project Manager

RE: 4011-4019 WASHINGTON STREET, ROSLINDALE – SMALL PROJECT REVIEW

Dear Ms. DaRosa:

Please accept the following comments on behalf of WalkUP Roslindale with respect to the proposed rental residential development at 4011-4019 Washington Street (the “**Proposed Project**”). As set forth in the Small Project Review application, this will be a consequential development project, located just over half a mile from the end of the Orange Line at Forest Hills, and containing, as proposed, 19 housing units and ground floor commercial space, and providing 3 deed-restricted affordable units under the BPDA’s Inclusionary Development Policy (“**IDP**”). Although we generally support the Proposed Project, being in favor of production of new housing in our neighborhood, city, and region as an integral part of the required response to our region’s growing job base, population, and housing affordability crisis resulting from decades of inequitable underbuilding and patterns of development and housing availability, we have the following concerns, which our members also voiced in person at the community meeting on August 18th. Our comments intend to emphasize the importance of addressing both the need for more affordable housing and energy efficiency in every development project that our city considers.

1. Housing Affordability

The Proposed Project is located in a part of our neighborhood where household incomes are lower than average and competition for scarce and increasingly expensive housing is displacing our most vulnerable neighbors. Indeed, there has been almost no new housing constructed in this area for the last several decades. We can and should do more as a city to make sure that everyone who wants to make and keep their home here is able to do so. We recommend that the developers commit to including at least one additional affordable unit in the building, increasing the percentage of affordable units to 21% instead of the minimum requirement of 13%.

2. Parking

Motor vehicle driving has significant negative impacts on our neighborhood's pedestrian safety and our residents' health, and is a leading cause of the global climate crisis. Developing new housing that does not induce demand for motor vehicles is critical to achieving a walkable future for our city. We therefore welcome a parking space to unit ratio below 1:1 for the Proposed Project. Additionally, we appreciate that some of the units will be sold unbundled from parking spaces and advocate for as many parking spaces as possible to be sold separately, both to increase affordability and to make this transit-rich location appealing to residents that do not own (and do not want to own) a motor vehicle.

The bike parking should be revised to meet the current City of Boston bike parking guidelines (January 2021 version 2.1) that provide for more accessible bike parking.

3. Mitigation Items

As part of mitigation, and to improve the safety of residents of the Proposed Project and surrounding neighborhood, we propose the following items:

- Vision Zero safety improvements for the intersection of Washington Street and Archdale Road, including raised crosswalks crossing Archdale Road
- Installation of covered bus stops at the intersection of Archdale and Washington
- Installation of at least one safe crosswalk across Washington Street between Archdale Road and Firth Road

4. Roslindale Gateway Path/Blackwell Path Extension and Arboretum Road

The Proposed Project's location is 0.1 miles (3 minute walk) to the South Street Arnold Arboretum entrance. When completed, the Roslindale Gateway Path will be an amenity for residents of the development and the broader surrounding neighborhood. Now in the design stage, the protected greenway will connect the Southwest Corridor pathway, Forest Hills, the south Washington

neighborhood and Roslindale Village. A significant contribution for this effort would be an excellent way for this Proposed Project to bring value and increased safe accessibility to its own backyard immediately.

5. Green Building

We welcome what is possibly the first green roof in Roslindale as part of the Proposed Project, and the willingness of the developers to meet with community gardening groups to consider the possibility of a vegetable garden.

The Proposed Project is below the Large Project Review threshold and is only technically required to meet building code-based energy efficiency and green building requirements. However, the BPDA should require the Proposed Project to exceed those limited standards and approach Net Zero/Zero Plus/LEED Gold-Platinum standards. If our city is truly serious about preparing for and attempting to mitigate the climate crisis, all new buildings need to be far more efficient in their use of energy. The Proposed Project should be a “net zero” building (energy used equals the amount of energy generated by the building on an annual basis). A BPDA-approved proposed 14-unit residential addition to Roslindale Hardware (at 4407 Washington St - just a mile down the street from the Proposed Project) is an excellent example of how to use solar and energy efficient techniques and materials to create a structure that is close to or better than net zero.

The Commonwealth is decarbonizing the electrical utility grid rapidly, so investing in electric and renewable infrastructure in the Proposed Project is critical to avoid erecting a building that will emit more CO₂ for decades to come. We strongly recommend that:

- All appliances should be electric.
- Heating and cooling should be provided by either ground- or air-sourced heat pumps. Utility incentives and tax credits (such as SMART, the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target) can help reduce this cost.
- Solar panels should be included in the design. Other developments in the area have considered retrofitting their buildings only to give up due to the logistical hurdles of dividing up costs and benefits amongst multiple units, as well as the significant cost of modifying an existing structure (versus including solar from the start).
- Each parking space should have access to an electric vehicle charging station. At a minimum, dark conduit should be installed next to each space so that adding charging stations could be accomplished with minimum expense in the future.

After the Proposed Project is built, it will be too late to implement these energy efficiency measures that could easily be incorporated at the design phase.

In closing, we wish to reiterate our overall support for the Proposed Project, while emphasizing our comments set forth above, especially with regard to increasing the number of affordable units.

Sincerely,

Ben Bruno

Resident @ 27 Colgate Road #2, Roslindale, on behalf of the WalkUP Roslindale Steering Group

Ricardo Austrich, Resident @ 843 South Street, Roslindale
Devin Cole, Resident @ 169 Orange Street, Roslindale
Steve Gag, Resident @ 631 South Street, Roslindale
Liz Graham-Meredith, Resident @ 6 Crandall Street, Roslindale
Sarah Kurpiel Lee, Resident @ 65 Cornell Street, Roslindale
Matthew Lawlor, Resident @ 15 Basto Terrace, 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 #2, Roslindale
Rebecca Phillips, Resident @ 10 Tappan Street, Roslindale
Courtney Pong, Business Owner, 5 Basile Street, 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 these comments as representing the collective support of our steering group members (indicated above) resulting from our mission and principles.