

WALKUP WALKABLE URBAN PLACE ROSLINDALE

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

25 July 2025

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY (camille.platt@boston.gov)

Camille Platt, Project Manager
Boston Planning Department
Boston City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

**RE: Comment and Support Letter
Project Notification Form – 1200 Centre Street, Roslindale, MA**

Dear Ms. Platt:

Please accept the following comments on behalf of WalkUP Roslindale with respect to the proposed 78-unit deeply affordable rental residential development for seniors located on the campus of Hebrew Senior Life (“**HSL**”) at 1200 Centre Street, Roslindale, MA (the “**Proposed Project**”).

We strongly support the Proposed Project for several reasons, as follows:

- As noted above, the Proposed Project’s most notable feature is its universal, deep affordability. With the Boston metropolitan region in the throes of an ongoing, long-standing housing affordability emergency, having 78 units of housing all made available to seniors with incomes at or below 50% of the area median income (“**AMI**”) is desperately needed and deeply appreciated.
- The Proposed Project would be constructed on what is now and has for many years been nothing more than a surface parking lot. This has been an unfortunate underutilization of valuable land at a critical gateway into our neighborhood. We are pleased to see HSL and their design team making such a bold decision. We also note that this bold approach is supported by the long-sought safety-focused redesign of the Walter/Centre intersection which the Proposed Project faces. The Proposed Project is ideally timed to help our community make immediate use of a far better public realm at this location.
- The overall design and program of the Proposed Project reflect a forward-thinking, sensitive approach to the location, using careful façade articulation and careful place of the building to hold this critical corner and create the kinds of outdoor spaces and connections that have been

lacking in this location but are now made possible both by HSL's investment and the intersection improvements at Walter/Centre. In particular, the outstanding regional amenity that is the Arnold Arboretum will be a short, much safer, and far more pleasant walk away from future residents than is currently the case.

- The level of parking and access for both motor vehicles and bicycles (especially the potential for a BlueBike station location) indicates that HSL have carefully considered the likely characteristics of travel mode choice by future residents with an eye toward fostering sustainability over the long term. We very much appreciate and applaud the direction in which HSL are heading.
- Finally, we note that collaborative and open approach that HSL have taken with respect to the Proposed Project's design over the course of the process to date. We are aware that building height is a particular concern that has been articulated by the Arnold Arboretum's representatives and that HSL have held pre-filing meetings with them, as well as the Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association and members of WalkUP Roslindale's Board. The shadow analysis and photo simulations for the Proposed Project should, we believe, alleviate concerns about the Proposed Project's visual and practical impacts. This is an important corner, the need for deeply affordable senior housing is immense, and it is our view that the Proposed Project successfully meets and balances these conditions.

In closing, we wish to reiterate our strong support for the Proposed Project and urge the Planning Department to move with urgency to approve the PNF at the earliest opportunity and support the necessary dimensional zoning relief and expedite the Proposed Project overall as part of the Mayor's Executive Order promoting affordable housing throughout the city.

Sincerely yours,
WalkUP Roslindale Board of Directors

About WalkUP Roslindale

WalkUP Roslindale, which takes its name from the international movement to foster “**Walkable Urban Places**,” is a collaborative group of residents and business owners dedicated to making Roslindale the most walkable neighborhood in Boston. We advocate for more housing of all types and at all levels of affordability as well as improvements to our public and private built environment that strengthen walking, cycling, transit, 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 board of directors of about just over twenty individuals and have over 800 additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at www.walkuproslindale.org.

Copy (by email) to:

Michelle Wu, Mayor (mayor@boston.gov)

Ben Weber, City Councilor, District 6 (Benjamin.weber@boston.gov)

Enrique Pepén, City Councilor, District 5 (enrique.pepen@boston.gov)

Josh McCorkle, ONS Representative, Roslindale (josh.mccorkle@boston.gov)