



540 Commonwealth Avenue

Boston University

Revised Institutional Master Plan Notification Form

For Sixth Amendment to the Boston University Charles River
Campus 2013 - 2023 Institutional Master Plan

October 5, 2020

submitted to
Boston Planning & Development Agency

submitted by **Trustees of Boston University**

prepared by **Fort Point Associates, Inc.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROJECT NARRATIVE

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
2.0	SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS	1
3.0	EXPEDITED INSTUTIONAL MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW	3
4.0	BOSTON UNIVERSITY MISSION AND GOALS	3
5.0	PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT	5

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Locus Map
Figure 2	Boston University Charles River Campus IMP Area
Figure 3	Aerial View of Project Site
Figure 4	Existing Conditions Photographs Key
Figure 5	Existing Conditions Photographs – Exterior
Figure 6	Existing Conditions Photographs – Interior
Figure 7	Existing Ground Floor Plan
Figure 8	Existing Second Floor Plan
Figure 9	Existing Third Floor Plan

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A	BPDA Correspondence
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PROJECT NARRATIVE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 80D-9 of the Boston Zoning Code, Trustees of Boston University (the “Proponent”) is submitting this Revised Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP NF) to the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) to amend the Boston University Charles River Campus 2013 – 2023 Institutional Master Plan (IMP). The IMP NF for this Project was originally submitted in March 2020 and has been revised and is being re-submitted due to the impact of COVID-19 on the BPDA review process (see Section 5.3, BPDA Approved Temporary Institutional Use, below).

The sixth amendment to the IMP will include the existing building at 540 Commonwealth Avenue (the “Project Site”) as a new Proposed Institutional Project (PIP) in the Boston University Charles River Campus IMP. The Proponent is currently leasing and occupying approximately 16,280 square feet (sf) at the Project Site for academic and administrative use (the “Project”). The University submitted a request to the BPDA to grant authorization to utilize this space on a temporary basis following the City’s of Boston’s emergency process for COVID-19 responses. The BPDA issued a recommendation to approve these temporary institutional uses on August 3, 2020. With the submittal of this IMP NF, the University is proceeding with the IMP Amendment process to seek approval for continued long-term use of the space.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS

Since the implementation of the IMP in 2013, five amendments have been reviewed and approved by the BPDA, as described in the following sections.

2.1 FIRST AMENDMENT – CENTER FOR INTEGRATED LIFE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

The First Amendment to the IMP (the “First Amendment”) added the Rajen Kilachand Center for Integrated Life Sciences and Engineering (CILSE), located at 610 Commonwealth Avenue, as a PIP. The First Amendment was reviewed and approved by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) in November 2013 and by the Boston Zoning Commission in January 2014. The state-of-the-art neurosciences research facility was completed in 2017 and has become a centralized home to research programs formerly dispersed throughout the Charles River Campus.

2.2 SECOND AMENDMENT – 700 BEACON STREET

The Second Amendment to the IMP (the “Second Amendment”) added an existing building at 700 Beacon Street to the list of PIPs. Acquired by Boston University (the University) from another college in January of 2015, the three-story, 37,000 square foot space at 700 Beacon Street is being used to house various institutional functions such as art studios, labs, office and meeting spaces, and teaching rooms. The Second Amendment was reviewed and approved by the BRA in September 2015 and by the Zoning Commission in October 2015.

2.3 THIRD AMENDMENT – 1047 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

The Third Amendment to the IMP (the “Third Amendment”) allowed the University to lease the residential portions of an existing building at 1047 Commonwealth Avenue for a term of 22 months. This lease accommodated up to 350 students and resident assistants displaced by the Myles Standish Hall Renovation Project. The Third Amendment went into effect in May 2016. The lease of the property commenced in August 2016 and terminated in June 2018.

2.4 FOURTH AMENDMENT – BU CASTLE ADDITION

The Fourth Amendment to the IMP (the “Fourth Amendment”) allowed the construction of a small addition to the existing building at 225 Bay State Road (the “Castle”). The PIP provided expanded event space and accessibility upgrades on the first floor in addition to renovations to the exterior facade. The Fourth Amendment to the IMP went into effect in May 2017. The project was completed in early September 2018.

2.5 THE FIFTH AMENDMENT – CENTER FOR COMPUTING AND DATA SCIENCES

The Fifth Amendment to the IMP (“Fifth Amendment”): 1) increased the allowable building height and eliminated 300 proposed underground parking spaces for the previously approved PIP located at Site CC at 645 - 665 Commonwealth Avenue, and; 2) included digital signage, located at Warren Towers at 700 Commonwealth Avenue, as a new PIP. The University proposed to construct a new, centrally-located academic building (the Center for Computing and Data Sciences) to serve the departments and institutes focused on computational and data sciences. The project includes substantial off-site improvements and will be the largest fossil-fuel free building in Boston at the time of completion. The Fifth Amendment was approved by the BPDA in July 2019 and by the Zoning Commission in August 2019.

3.0 EXPEDITED INSTUTIONAL MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW

The Proponent is submitting this Revised IMPNF for the proposed sixth amendment to the IMP (the “Sixth Amendment”) in accordance with Section 80D-9.2, Amendment of Institutional Master Plan – Expedited Review for Certain Small Projects. The Project qualifies for the expedited amendment procedure as follows:

- The amendment proposes no changes to the IMP other than the addition of this single Project;
- The Project does not meet the size thresholds for Large Project Review, as set forth under Article 80B-2; and
- The Project is an exempt project, as provided in subsection 2 of Section 80D-2(1)(b):
 - The Project is located within the Boston Proper District, which is not a district where the underlying zoning requires all institutional projects to be consistent with the Institutional Master Plan;
 - The 16,280 sf lease will extend Boston University’s Institutional Use by less than 20,000 sf;
 - The Project is not a phase of another PIP, nor is it a high-impact sub-use; and
 - The University elects to make the Project subject to the provisions of the IMP.

4.0 BOSTON UNIVERSITY MISSION AND GOALS

Boston University is an international, comprehensive, private research university committed to educating students to be reflective, resourceful individuals ready to live, adapt, and lead in an interconnected world. The University is committed to generating new knowledge to benefit society.

The University remains dedicated to its founding principles: that higher education should be accessible to all and that research, scholarship, artistic creation, and professional practice should be conducted in the service of the wider community on a local and international scale. These principles endure in Boston University’s insistence on the value of diversity, tradition, standards of excellence, and dynamic engagement with the City of Boston and the world.

The University comprises a remarkable range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs built on a strong foundation of the liberal arts and sciences. With the support and oversight of the Board of Trustees and through its world-renowned faculty, the University continually innovates in education and research to ensure that it meets the needs of students and an ever-changing world.

In 2007, the University completed its strategic plan, Choosing to be Great. The plan includes eight concrete goals in support of the University’s mission. Each goal is the product of

extensive discussions undertaken as a community involving its students, faculty, alumni, and friends.

Boston University's goals include:

- To support and enhance a world-class faculty whose members are dedicated to teaching and engaged in research, scholarship, and their professions.
- To continue to develop the special undergraduate educational environment that combines its commitment to a liberal arts and sciences education with professional opportunities, while creating flexible educational opportunities to leverage the depth of the College of Arts and Sciences and its other schools and colleges. To continue its commitment to inclusiveness based on merit for all students, irrespective of race, religion, or economic status, and to raise the financial aid needed to do this.
- To expand and enhance the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) as the core of Boston University and its undergraduate programs. The University is committed to increasing the number of CAS faculty members and expanding and renewing the College's facilities.
- To enhance the residential campus and student life experience for its undergraduate students in the special urban environment of Boston.
- To strengthen scholarship and research throughout Boston University by support of key disciplinary graduate programs.
- To enhance its nationally recognized professional schools and colleges, including Medicine, Management, Law, and Fine Arts. The University's commitments to Medicine, Law, and Management are key to its prominence as a major urban research university. The College of Fine Arts offers a special opportunity for showcasing Boston University on campus, in the city, and around the world.
- To increase its emphasis on interdisciplinary research and graduate education in order to expand its leadership in important fields and the collaborative atmosphere across the University's campuses.
- To continue to foster the engagement of the University in the City and the world, through public service and by extending the reach of its educational programs, including both study-abroad opportunities for Boston-based students and the creation of new opportunities for students from around the world to experience a Boston University education.

In addition, the University strives to maintain and improve aging and historic buildings and infrastructure throughout the Charles River Campus to provide improved accessibility, living, and academic environments for students, faculty, and visitors.

5.0 PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT

5.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Project Site is an approximately 9,331 sf parcel in the Kenmore Square neighborhood of Boston. It is bounded by Commonwealth Avenue to the north, Brookline Avenue to the west, and Newbury Street to the south. The 26,850 sf, three-story building on the Project Site shares a wall with the abutting buildings to the east and west. All three buildings have commercial uses on the ground floor. The Project Site is located adjacent to the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority's (MBTA) Green Line Kenmore Station and is in close proximity to the MBTA Commuter Rail Lansdowne Station. Although located near the IMP Area, this property is not currently included in the Boston University Charles River Campus IMP. See Figure 1, Locus Map; Figure 2, Boston University Charles River Campus IMP Area; Figure 3, Aerial View of Project Site; Figure 4, Existing Conditions Photographs Key; and Figure 5; Existing Conditions Photographs – Exterior.

The upper two floors of the Project building were previously used as a Kaplan testing center. Each floor contains a variety of spaces previously used for instructional and conference uses as well as men's and women's restrooms. Stairs and an elevator serve each floor and are located toward the center of the floor plan. An additional fire stair is located along the south end of the building. The ground floor of the Project includes only the stairwell and a small lobby for the elevator. See Figure 6, Existing Conditions Photographs – Interior; Figure 7, Existing Ground Floor Plan; Figure 8, Existing Second Floor Plan; and Figure 9, Existing Third Floor Plan.

Since the BPDA's approval of the proposed temporary institutional uses, described in Section 5.3 below, the Proponent has occupied the Project Site and is currently using it as faculty and staff offices as well as studios primarily associated with the development of instructional videos to support the University's online programs. Due to COVID-19, the University has had to convert more than 100 spaces for temporary classroom use, with the result that there was not sufficient space available for programmatic needs without the use of the Project Site.

5.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In the March 2020 IMPNF, the Proponent proposed to lease 16,280 sf on floors two and three of this three-story building for academic and administrative uses to support the University's on-line programs. The Project includes minor interior reconfiguration to best suit these programmatic needs.

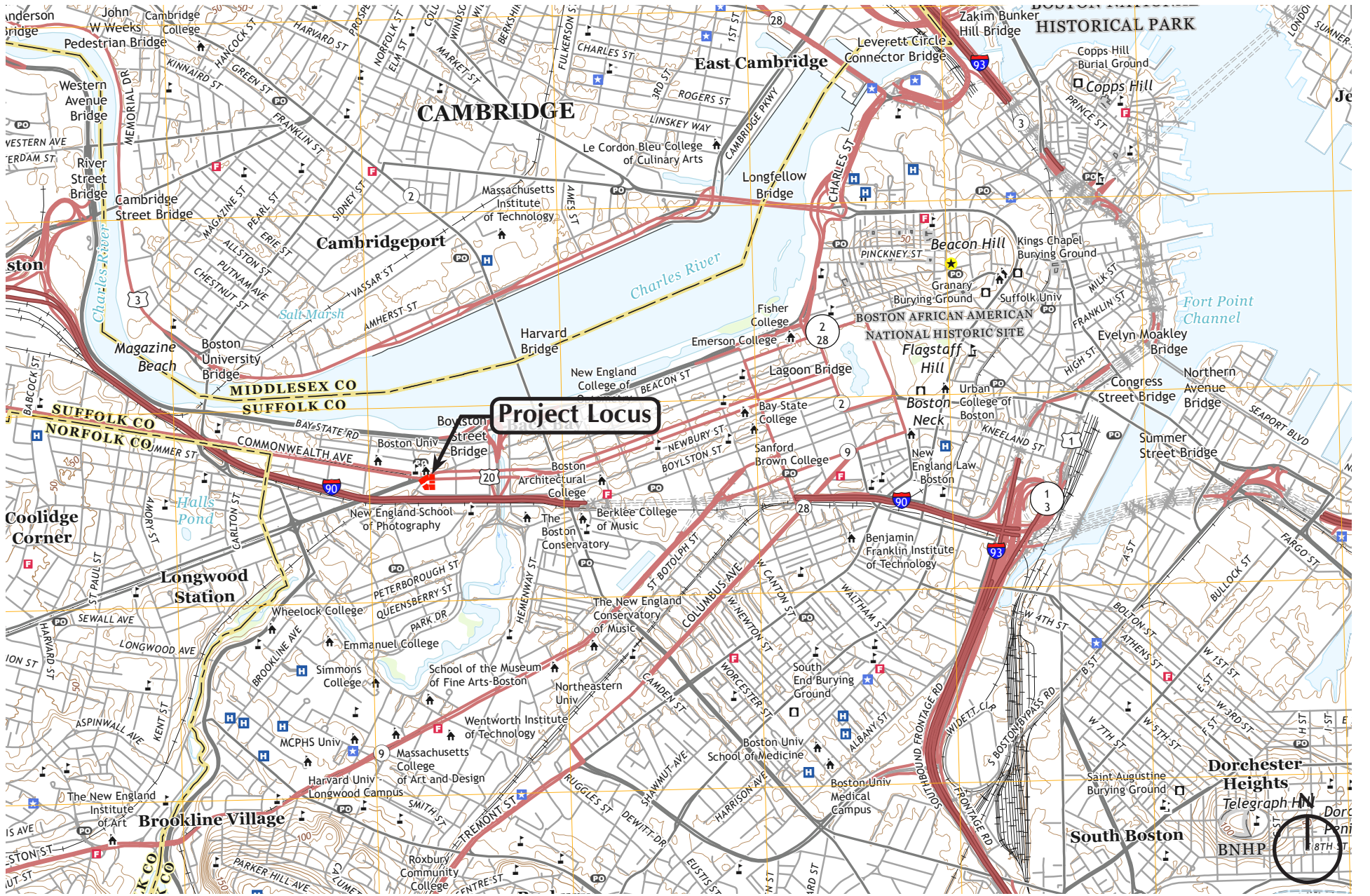
Below is a description of the Project elements:

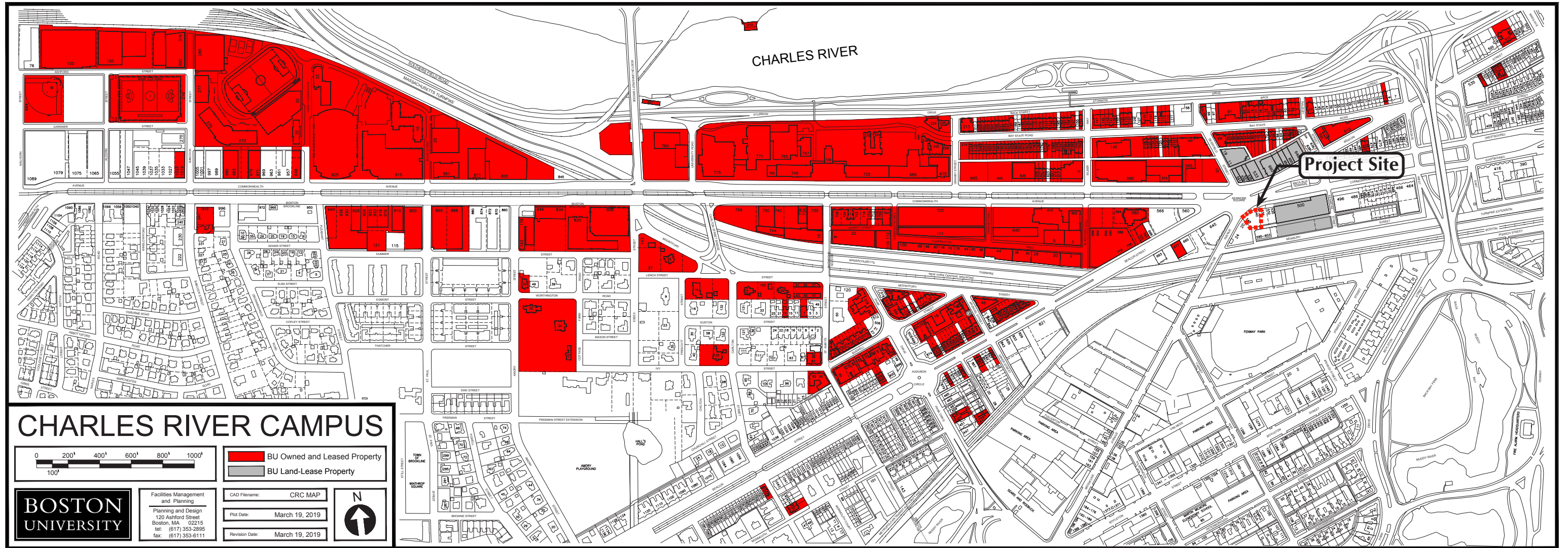
Address:	540 Commonwealth Avenue
Property Owner:	The Shubert Foundation
Lessee:	Trustees of Boston University
Zoning:	B-4 General Business
Current Occupant/Use:	Occupied by Boston University for academic and administrative use
Building size:	24,420 sf (RSF)/3 floors
Area of Lease:	16,280 sf (RSF) on floors 2 and 3
Duration of Lease:	5 years with options for two 5-year renewal periods
Proposed Uses:	Academic/Administrative

5.3 BPDA APPROVED TEMPORARY INSTITUTIONAL USE

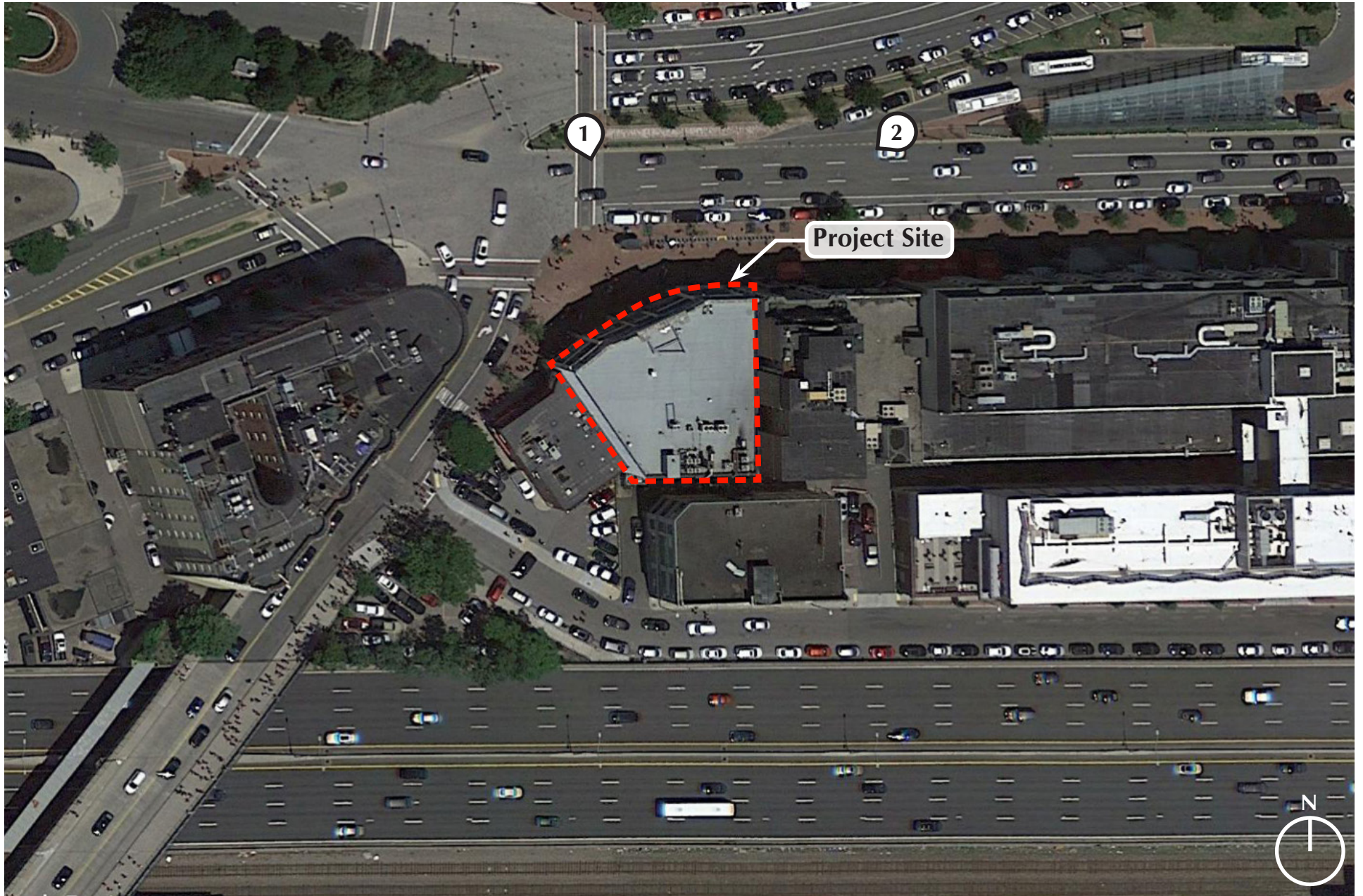
The Proponent originally submitted an IMPNF in March 2020. The review of the IMPNF by the BPDA and the community was postponed by the substantial impact of COVID-19 on the City's public and agency review processes. On July 23, 2020 the Proponent submitted a request to the BPDA for authorization to utilize the Project Site for use on a temporary basis pending review and approval of the Sixth Amendment to the IMP.

The BPDA issued a recommendation to approve the temporary institutional use for the University (addressed to the Commissioner of Inspectional Services) on August 3, 2020. This approval permits the change of use for a period of six months, with the option to renew for a similar period, with the proviso that the University will complete the IMP amendment process. With the submittal of this IMPNF, the University is proceeding with that required amendment process. See Attachment A, BPDA Correspondence.











Exterior View 1: Looking south toward Project Site from Commonwealth Avenue



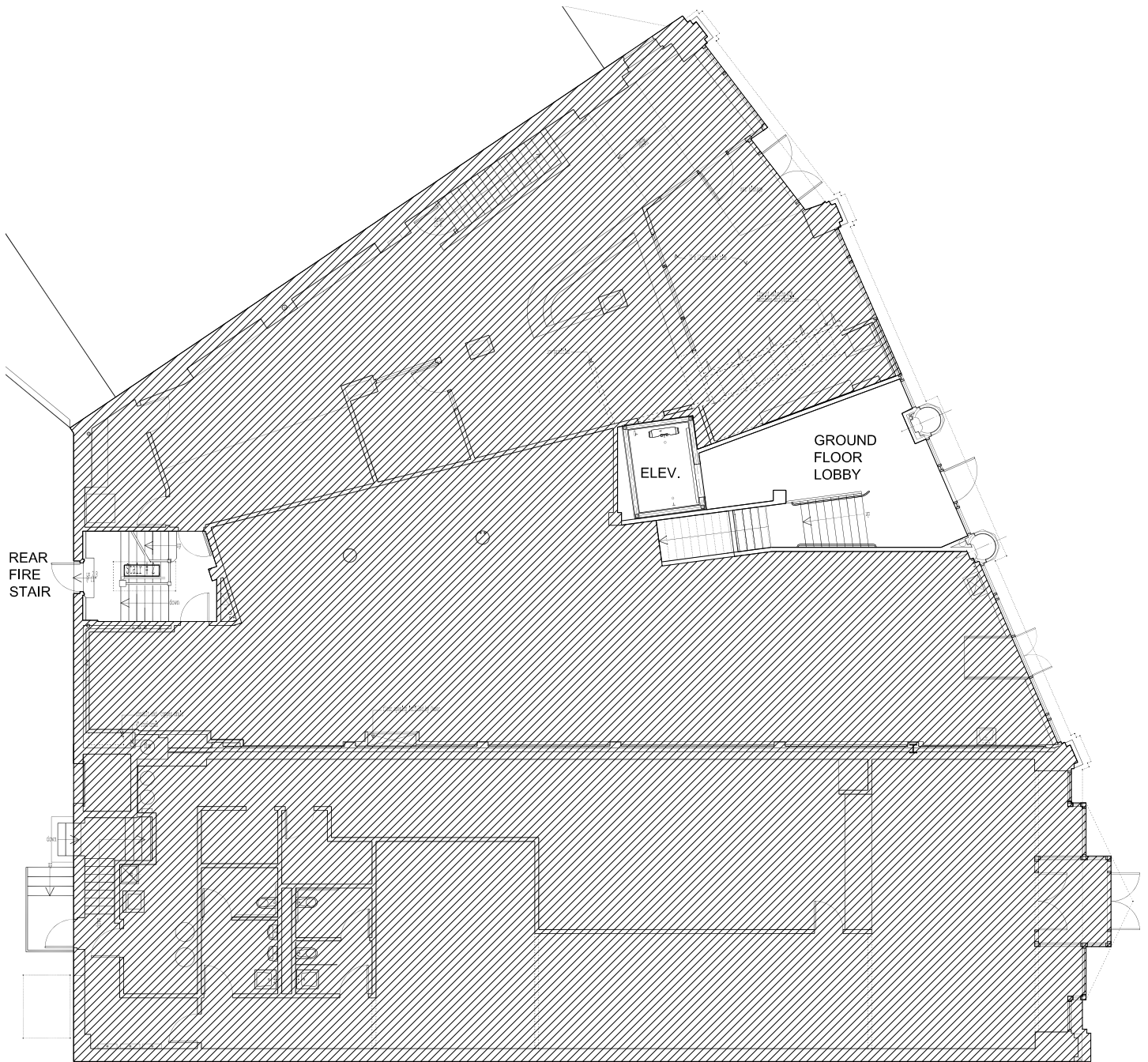
Exterior View 2: Looking southwest toward Project Site from Commonwealth Avenue

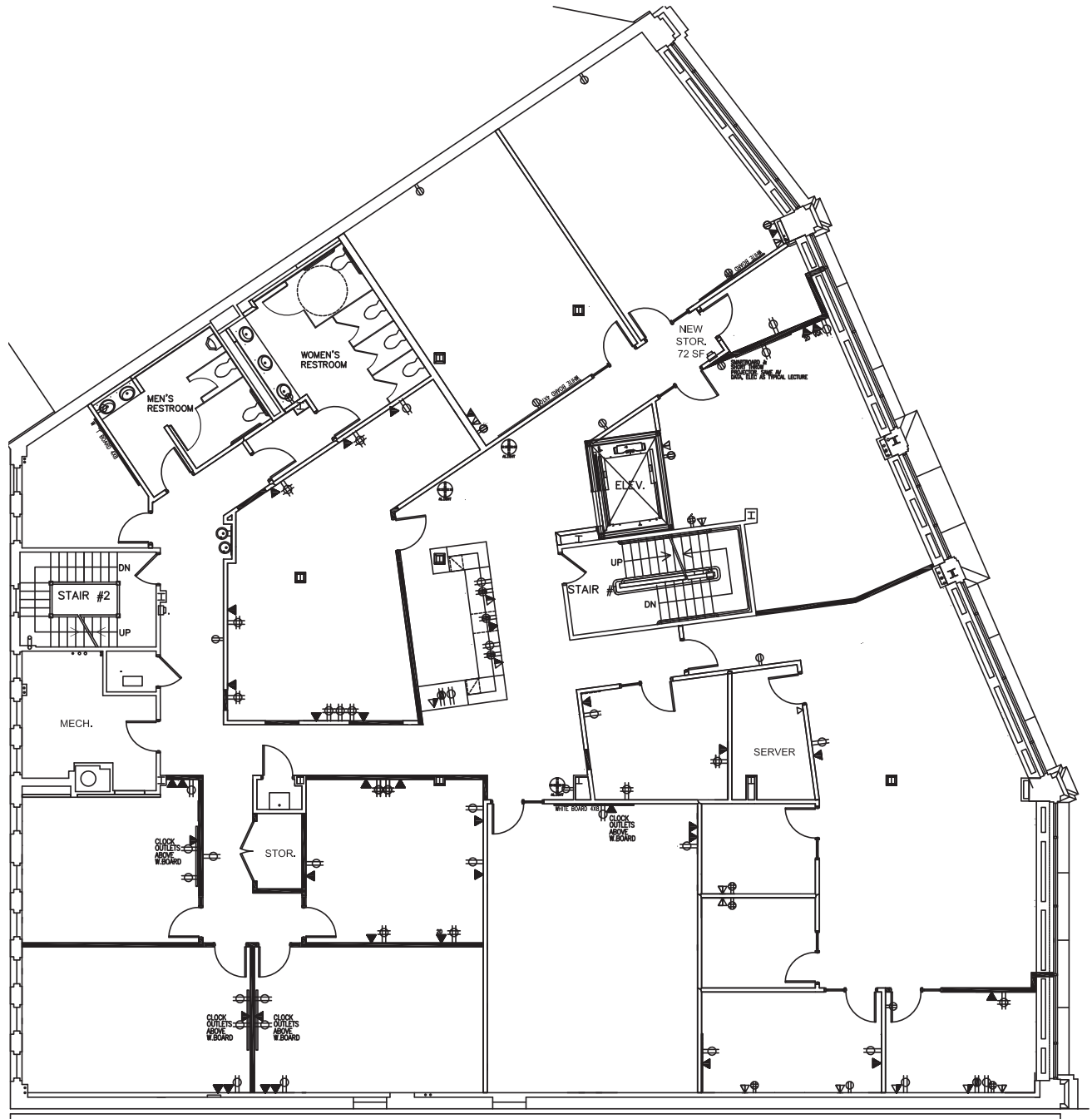


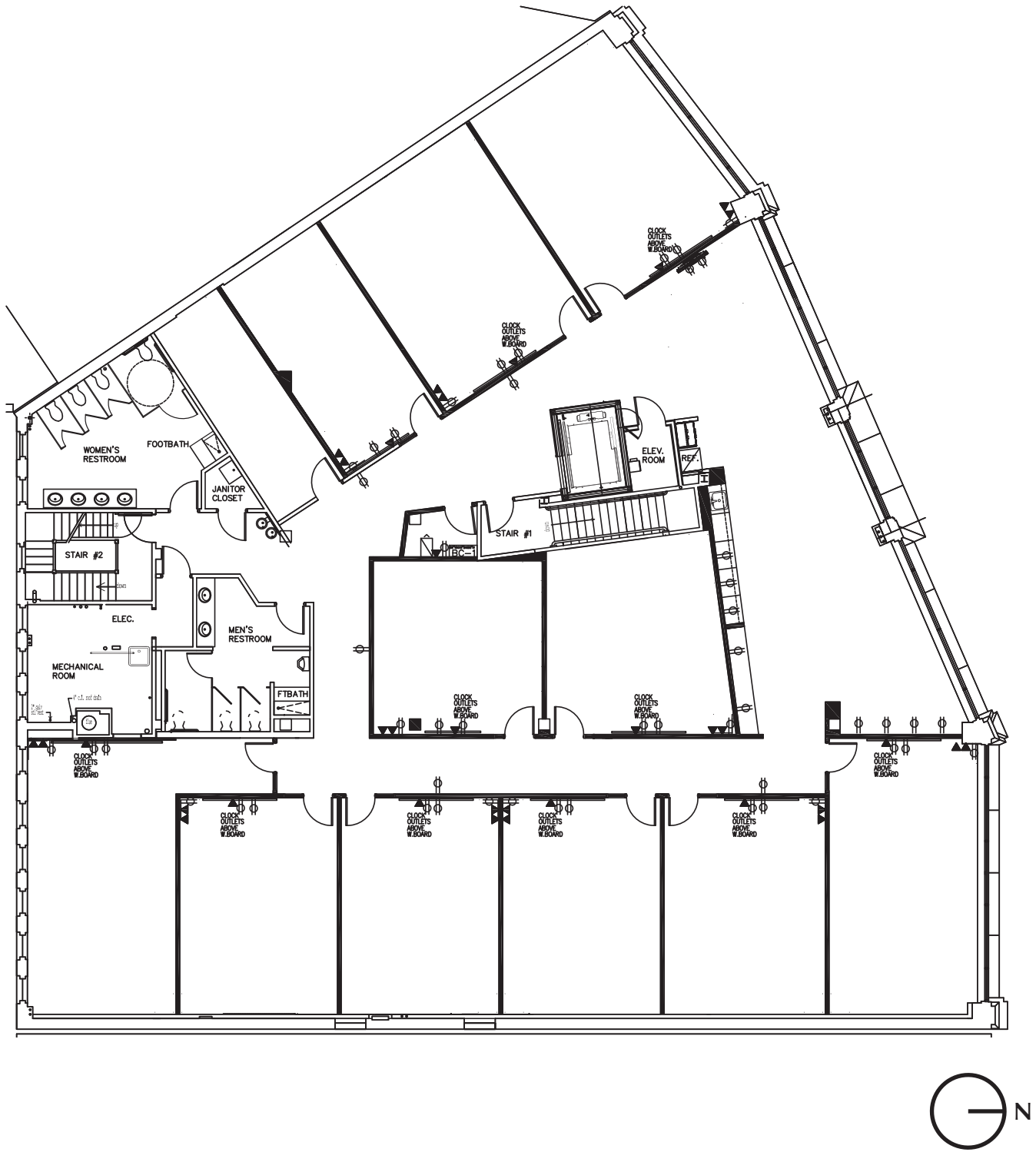
Interior View 1: North-facing instructional space



Interior View 2: Interior instructional space







Attachment A

BPDA CORRESPONDENCE



DATE: July 23, 2020

TO: Nupoor Monani, Senior Institutional Planner, BPDA

FROM: Gary Nicksa, Senior Vice President of Operations, Boston University *gun*

CC: Brian Golden, Director, BPDA
Mike Christopher, Deputy Director of Development Review, BPDA
Edward Carmody, Institutional Planner & Project Manager, BPDA
Jake Sullivan, Vice President for Government & Community Affairs, BU
Ken Ryan, Director of City Relations, BU

OVERVIEW

Boston University submits the following application requesting authorization to utilize the property at 540 Commonwealth Avenue (the "Site") for institutional use on a temporary basis pending review and approval of the Sixth Amendment to the 2013-2023 Charles River Campus Institutional Master Plan. An Institutional Master Plan Notification Form for this amendment, filed March 2020, sought approval to use this space for academic and administrative uses to support the University's online programs.

The property is located near to the Questrom School of Business at 595 Commonwealth Avenue and urgently needed for faculty office and video recording for the University's new online Masters in Business Administration ([Online MBA](#)) program starting September 2020.

Due to COVID-19, the University has had to de-densify its classrooms and faculty offices. This has required the conversion of over 100 spaces on campus to temporary classroom use and the University does not have appropriate space available for the Online MBA program.

OVERALL CLASSROOM AND ACADEMIC SPACE DE-DENSIFICATION

Overall De-Densification Strategy

It has remained an important goal for Boston University to develop a plan of how students might best begin or continue their academic programs and residential experiences in fall 2020. These efforts to return to a residential campus are being developed in accordance with strict public health and safety guidelines.

The framework for this approach is Learning *from* Anywhere (LfA), a mix of in-person, remote and asynchronous components to create a flexible learning experience. The new format was chosen because it can accommodate safety requirements that may be imposed by public health authorities, as well as travel challenges faced by some students. LfA provides students with the option to live on campus and be in the classroom in-person, or participate remotely from a residence hall or an off-campus home.

Safety precautions limit the number of people in any given space at one time with at least 6' spacing between classroom seats. Capacities of instruction spaces across campus are being reduced by as much as two-thirds to meet the new guidelines. This has made it necessary to add to the number of rooms used for instruction. Space that once could be used as temporary production space for online instruction has now been allocated to compensate for the de-densification strategy.

OFF-CAMPUS BUILDING/PROPERTY INFORMATION

540 Commonwealth Avenue	
Address of Building	540 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215
Current Use(s)	Classroom and office
Current Occupancy	Vacant
Current License Issued	N/A

Written Consent from Property Owner

See Exhibit A, attached.

Description of Abutting Buildings

Located in a heavily commercial area, Kenmore Square, the property is a 3 story building of 26,850sf. To the west is a two story commercial building with Santander Bank on the ground floor. To the east is a mixed used building with Ace Tickets on the first floor and residential units above.

The site is in close proximity to other University-owned property in the East Campus portion of the Charles River Campus including the Questrom School of Business, the Metcalf Science Center and a number of student residences. Given the convenience and proximity to other Business School faculty, 540 Commonwealth Avenue is an ideal location for Online MBA faculty offices and work space.

Auxiliary Spaces Within the Building

The first floor of the property has commercial uses that include Bank of America, Qdoba Mexican Grill, and McDonalds. The upper floors are served by a separate entrance to the building.

Proposed Occupancy

540 Commonwealth Avenue	
Rentable Square Feet (RSF)	16,280 RSF
Planned Use of Space	Faculty / staff offices and online instruction studios
Location of Office and Work Space	Floors 2 and 3 of 3-story office building
Occupancy Date	August 15, 2020

Description of Interior Space

The building is located on an approximately 9,331 sf parcel in the Kenmore Square neighborhood of Boston. It is bounded by Commonwealth Avenue to the north, Brookline Avenue to the west, and Newbury Street to the south. The 26,850 sf, three-story building shares a wall with the abutting buildings to the east and west. All three buildings have commercial uses on the ground floor. The site is located adjacent to the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority's (MBTA) Green Line Kenmore Station and is in close proximity to the MBTA Commuter Rail Lansdowne Station.

The upper two floors of the building were previously used as a Kaplan Testing Prep center. Each floor contains a variety of spaces previously used for instructional and conference uses as well as men's and women's restrooms. Stairs and an elevator serve each floor and are located toward the center of the floor plan. An additional fire stair is located along the south end of the building. The ground floor includes only the stairwell and a small lobby for the elevator.

MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Past Experience

Boston University has extensive experience operating commercial office space in Kenmore Square. For several decades, the University owned and operated over 300,000 square feet on the north side of Kenmore Square. In 2018, the buildings were sold to a commercial developer (Related Beal) and are currently being redeveloped.

Proposed University Personnel

The space will be occupied by Boston University faculty and staff who develop online coursework. As with on-campus locations, the University will be responsible for the interior maintenance and cleaning of its leased space at 540 Commonwealth Avenue.

Prescribed Path(s) of Travel to Campus

The property is in the south west corner of Kenmore Square, at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue, Brookline Avenue and Beacon Street. Paths to the various campus buildings from the property include signaled intersections.

The University operates the BU Shuttle that traverses the campus on a regular schedule. The shuttle will operate with a reduced number of passengers on board at any one time, both seated and standing, and riders will enter only through the rear door. Riders must wear face coverings at all times. A new Terrier Transit app will be launched in the fall allowing students to consider all their transportation options and routes in one mobile app - BU Shuttle, MBTA buses and trains, walking, bicycling, Bluebikes, and Zipcar. The BU Shuttle fleet will be disinfected following peak service times each day, and at night prior to service the following day.

Rules Regarding Face Coverings

The University is committed to promoting a safe campus environment for students, faculty, and staff in accordance with current state and local public safety guidelines. Face coverings must be worn at all times: in any shared spaces, in BU student residences, in all University buildings, on the BU Shuttle, and on public transportation, as well as on the street and in public spaces. Wearing a face covering does not replace the need to maintain physical distancing and observing safety protocols in shared spaces.

COVID-19 Public Health Protocols

Boston University is implementing comprehensive public health protocols to limit the spread of COVID-19. The protocols include daily attestation, mandatory use of face coverings, social distancing, hand washing, enhanced HVAC ventilation and filtration, expanded cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces, expanded in-house virus testing, contact tracing, and comprehensive communication with students, faculty, and staff.

The in-house COVID-19 testing program for students, faculty, and staff this fall will focus on identifying both asymptomatic and symptomatic members of our community who are carrying COVID-19 so they can be promptly treated and isolated. While bringing a testing program in-house is an enormous undertaking, the University will be able to test and monitor our community faster as a result.

BU will establish test collection sites in August on both the Charles River and Medical Campuses, with different locations to be announced for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. The University will use the RT-PCR, or reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction, testing method which detects both symptomatic and asymptomatic infections. The test is highly specific for COVID-19, with an extremely low false positive rate.

Testing will be collected by the AN (anterior nares) self-administered method of acquisition from the nostril, with observation, at one of several testing sites on our campuses. The tests will be run through a laboratory established at the Rajen Kilachand Center for Integrated Life Sciences & Engineering, on the Charles River Campus.

The new BU Clinical Testing Lab will be run and overseen by certified clinical lab professionals and will work closely with BU Student Health Services and the BU Occupational Health Center. The facility has the capacity to process over 5,000 tests per day for the BU community, and results should be delivered confidentially within 24 hours. In all cases, faculty, staff, and students will receive test results and further instructions, as needed.

A web-based process is under development for use this fall to guide BU community members living, learning, or working on campus to a daily survey attesting whether they have COVID-19 symptoms. Students will complete this survey securely via Student Health Services Patient Connect. Faculty and staff will complete the survey via a separate health screening system. Survey results will route to medical professionals in the appropriate BU medical office—Student Health Services for students or the Occupational Health Center for faculty and staff.

Upon completion of the daily survey, individuals will receive a COVID-19 pass or status message that they may be required to show to enter BU buildings and events. The pass or status will indicate that individuals are clear to come to campus if they are asymptomatic, in compliance with the testing schedule, and have recently tested negative for COVID-19. Otherwise, it will indicate that they are overdue for testing/survey or advised to stay home until contacted by a medical health professional.

Cleaning Protocols

Following CDC guidance, Boston University's Facilities Management and Operations has developed new protocols in response to COVID-19. All custodial and trades staff wearing a mask and gloves while cleaning and providing maintenance services.

The overall levels and frequencies of cleaning have been enhanced to ensure high-touch points, such as elevator buttons, faucets, doorknobs, and handrails are disinfected using EPA-approved disinfectants multiple times a day. Additionally, custodial staff are using new equipment to clean and disinfect spaces across all buildings at BU, such as electrostatic broad spectrum sprayers that aerosolize viricidal cleaning agents that can be used in residences, dining facilities, laboratories, offices, classrooms, and other spaces on campus.

THE SHUBERT
FOUNDATION INC.

234 West 44th Street · New York, New York 10036 · Tel: 212.944.3777 · Fax: 212.944.3767 · www.shubertfoundation.org

VIA FEDEX

July 21, 2020

Boston Planning and Development Agency
1 City Hall Square, #9
Boston, MA 02201
Attn: Edward Carmody (PM)

Re: Authorization by Owner for request by Boston University for Temporary Change of Use for 540 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA

The Shubert Foundation, Inc. ("Owner") is the fee owner of the building located at 540 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts (the "Building"). Owner has entered into a five-year lease with Boston University ("BU") for use of the Building to aid BU in its effort to de-densify the campus by providing distance learning and other office uses during the pendency of the COVID-19 public health crisis and beyond.

With this letter, Owner hereby grants BU authorization to seek from the Boston Planning and Development Agency ("BPDA") and/or the Boston Inspectional Services Department ("ISD") a temporary change in use of the Building for University use.

Please do not hesitate to contact Julio Peterson, Vice President of Real Estate at (212)-944-4522 with any questions.

Sincerely,

THE SHUBERT FOUNDATION, INC.

By 

Gilbert C. Hoover, IV
Secretary





August 3, 2020

Mr. Dion Irish, Commissioner
Inspectional Services Department
1010 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02118

Re: **Guidance for Permitting Off-campus Spaces for Temporary Institutional Uses**
Boston University, 540 Commonwealth Avenue

Dear Commissioner Irish:

This letter serves as a recommendation to approve the temporary institutional uses for Boston University, as described herein, in accordance with the interdepartmental guidance (the "Guidance") towards permitting non-institutional spaces to be used for the purposes of institutional de-densification, issued by the City of Boston on July 9, 2020, and in accordance with the Boston Public Health Commission directive supporting this aim, issued June 24, 2020.

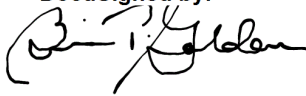
Boston University (the "University") submitted an application (the "Application") on July 30, 2020, detailing its plans for temporary occupancy of 540 Commonwealth Avenue in the Boston Proper Zoning District (Kenmore Square). The University will occupy two floors of the building, which were formerly used as a Kaplan Testing Prep center. These floors will be used as faculty and staff offices as well as online instruction studios (video recording) for the University's online MBA program at the Questrom School of Business. This temporary approval supports the University's de-densification of classroom and office space across campus. Because of the campus-wide de-densification, additional space is needed to support the online MBA program. The building is within walking distance of the University's Charles River Campus, particularly the Questrom School of Business (595 Commonwealth Avenue), and the University has sufficiently engaged its community Task Force and received positive feedback on the temporary use of the building.

Please note: the University filed an Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP NF) with the BPDA in March 2020 with the intent of amending the University's Institutional Master Plan (IMP) to add the aforementioned property to the University's IMP as leased space on a long-term basis. Due to COVID-19, the BPDA ceased review of the Amendment, along with all other Article 80 projects requiring community engagement. The University is committed to resuming a full IMP Amendment review process once it makes sense to do so, in coordination with BPDA Staff, in order to occupy 540 Commonwealth Avenue on a long-term basis. The temporary approval for space at this property intends to allow the University urgent access to this space, with the proviso that the University will complete the IMP Amendment process for continued long-term use of the space.

Given the above, BPDA Staff deems the University's Application for occupying this space in compliance with the Guidance and the Boston Public Health Commission's directive. BPDA Staff recommends that you permit the change of use for the proposed facility for a period of six months, beginning August 15,

2020, with the option for the University to renew for a similar period should that be deemed necessary and in accordance with the Guidance at that time, as well as in accordance with up-to-date public health recommendations. If you have any further questions or require additional information, please contact Edward Carmody, Institutional Planner & Project Manager, at 617.918.4422.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Brian Golden, Director