

Neighborhood Association of East Cambridge
101 Third Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

Richard Bourre
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street

Boston MA 02114

Re: Leggat McCall Properties, 40 Thorndike Street, Cambridge, MA
Request for MEPA Waiver

February 26, 2014

Dear Mr. Bourre,

The Neighborhood Association of East Cambridge is an association made-up of residents in the East Cambridge neighborhood surrounding 40 Thorndike Street, the subject property. We request that you deny Leggat-McCall's request for a waiver of a full Environmental Impact Review (EIR) under the MEPA statute. A comprehensive EIR is essential, due not only to the massive additional traffic that this project will generate (impacting air quality), but also due to other environmental factors such as asbestos remediation, wind impacts, noise and light pollution, wildlife habitat protection, and other environmental impacts caused by the subject redevelopment project.

The developer Leggat-McCall (LMP) has applied for a Special Permit from the City of Cambridge to change the use and renovate the 22-story Sullivan Courthouse into a 500,000 square foot commercial office building. LMP has stated that it will gut the building down to only the upright steel and the deck floors. This will require a major remediation of known asbestos in the property and demolition of tons of concrete and other building materials. It also represents a "substantial renovation" of the property far beyond 50% of its total area, and thus should be treated as "new construction" and compel full review under the MEPA statute.

LMP's application package cites a traffic study, conducted by their contractor, that estimates about 5,000 additional trips to the building will occur daily, once development is complete. Under the MEPA statute, if the development generates more than 3,000 daily trips, a mandatory Environmental Impact Review is triggered. In addition, the location of the building near major transportation nodes such as State Route 1, Interstate Route 93 & Interstate Route 90, suggests that it will contribute to already high air quality particulate matter levels.

We also want to bring to your attention that there are a pair of Peregrine Falcons, nesting in one of the building's exterior balconies. Because of this, the threshold to deny the waiver is triggered because the building is a habitat for a State-Listed Endangered Species. (301 CMR 11.00: MEPA Reg, Section 11.01, Review Thresholds.) The project seeking a waiver is in close proximity to the Charles River and ancillary wetlands and should be considered a site of concern under MEPA.

For the reasons stated above, and others, we request that you deny Leggat-McCall's request for a waiver from full compliance with MEPA regulations and conduct of a full Environmental Impact Review. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Mr. Hawley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Neighborhood Association of East Cambridge
By Michael Hawley