



Northeastern University
College of Arts, Media and Design

School of Architecture

November 30, 2012

William Tuttle, Director
Office of Real Estate Development
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
State Transportation Building at Ten Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Re: Support for the Cresset/ DeNormandie proposal for Parcel 9

Dear Bill-

It's hard to believe that 2012 is almost over, but I am very glad to see that we are making progress on the Parcel 7 & 9 front. As you know, I have been a member of the Advisory Committee for at least two years, and I have done my best to take the responsibility seriously. These sites are incredibly important for the future of the Greenway, the historic Haymarket area, the Pushcart market, and the North End. And while I am glad to know that we are now finally down to two competitors, I want to make clear that from my perspective, and from the perspective of good urban design, I think that one is vastly superior to the other.

I strongly support the Cresset/ DeNormandie team proposal for the Blackstone Market on Parcel 9. The Blackstone Market proposal is superior in several important ways. It is better programmatically, urbanistically, logistically, and architecturally. From a programmatic standpoint, bringing lively restaurants (by a developer with a proven record of success in the field) to the site is a big plus, but the integration of the market, with the pushcarts, and the new market at Parcel 7 will truly make this a destination for food. It's a great mix of uses. Urbanistically, the Cresset/ DeNormandie proposal creates a nice base that doesn't impede views of the historic Blackstone Block from the North End, and then adds a simple brick historically scaled mass on top of it for the apartments. The apartment block is very similar in scale to the historic buildings in the area. Logistically, the fact that DeNormandie already controls the other side of Blackstone Street is critical. The ability that the team brings to have that side developed alongside the improvements to the pushcart area and Parcel 9 is a huge advantage. This logistical advantage will make it possible to unlock the full potential of the entire Market District. Finally, the architecture of the Blackstone Market proposal is simply better. It has a clear bottom and top, with the bottom of the main building also serving as the base and restaurant level for the whole site. The relationship of the market bays to the apartment windows is simple and attractive, and the understanding of how key elements like signs work is a critical insight into this team's qualifications to proceed.

I am hopeful that the State team will make the right choice. It's an important part of the city, and we will all benefit from this excellent project.

Thanks, and best wishes for the holiday season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Thrush".

George Thrush, FAIA
Director
School of Architecture