

# downtown north association

November 28, 2012

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

**RE: Downtown North Association Support for the Blackstone Market  
Proposal for Redevelopment of Parcel 9 Within the Market District**

Dear Mr. Tuttle,

As an active member of the Parcel 7 & 9 Advisory Committee from the outset, I hereby express the strong support of the Downtown North Association for the Blackstone Market proposal submitted by the Cresset/DeNormandie team for the redevelopment of Parcel 9.

Now that MassDOT has narrowed the field of contenders from four to two, we believe that the Cresset/DeNormandie mixed-use residential/retail/restaurant proposal is far preferable to the hotel development proposal submitted by Normandy Partners. This assessment reflects our continued concurrence with the strengths and weaknesses of the various proposals as outlined in the June 1, 2012 letter from the Parcel 7 & 9 Advisory Committee, which is incorporated herein by reference; and we would particularly emphasize the relevance and importance of the following factors:

**a). *The Background of the Cresset/DeNormandie Team:*** The Cresset/DeNormandie project team clearly has the expertise, the experience and the resources to promptly and reliably and implement the redevelopment of Parcel 9, as proposed. Equally importantly, they have been involved in the Parcel 7 & 9 community planning process for the many months of the Advisory Committee effort; and as a result, they fully understand the nature and scope of the Market District, of which the development of Parcel 9 is an integral component. For that reason, we are also confident that they will be informed and responsive partners with the community as the planning and permitting of this process continues.

**b). *Its Market District Development Implications:*** Because one of the principals of the Cresset/DeNormandie development team - Philip DeNormandie -- has long owned properties on Blackstone Street across from Parcel 9, we fully expect that the long-awaited redevelopment of those properties will be planned and implemented in concert with development of Parcel 9. Such a coordinated strategy was strongly advocated by the Parcel 7 & 9 Advisory Committee; and it would greatly enhance the design and use of Blackstone Street as well as integrate and accelerate the development of the Market District as a whole. And that is a very important consideration to the surrounding communities.

***c). The Expressed and Continuing Support of the Haymarket Pushcart Association (HPA):*** Since the concept of the Market District is fundamentally based on the longstanding and continued success of the Haymarket Pushcart vendors on and around Blackstone Street, it is critically important that HPA support the proposed redevelopment of Parcel 9 and that they can work well over time with its owners, developers and managers. HPA is on record in its enthusiastic and exclusive support of the Blackstone Market proposal; they have had a long and positive working relationship with Philip DeNormandie; and they appear to have an equally good working relationship with the other members of the Cresset/DeNormandie development team. It is difficult to overemphasize the essential importance of such HPA support to the success of both Parcel 9 and Market District development plans.

***d). The Appropriateness of Housing as a Proposed Use:*** Beyond the need for both more affordable and market-rate housing in the downtown area, we have long believed that housing on this crucial site – along the Kennedy Greenway and across from the North End -- would be especially appropriate and advisable. As part of a larger mixed-use development, a vibrant new housing component would not only reflect the historical connection but also reinforce the contemporary connection between the North End and the Market District, which were part of the same community before the unfortunate separation created by the elevated Central Artery. With the residential marketing and leasing commitments that have been made to HPA and to the community by the Cresset/DeNormandie group, there is every reason to believe that the future residents of Parcel 9 will become the greatest champions of precisely the kind of active and vibrant Market District that will make this such an interesting and attractive place for them to live.

***e). The Quality of Blackstone Market Architecture and Urban Design:*** There was widespread professional and popular support within the Advisory Committee for the design approach that was reflected in the Blackstone Market proposal. This remains one of the great strengths of the Cresset/DeNormandie proposal as compared to any and all of its competitors; and that advantage is especially important to the architectural and urban design standards that will be set by Parcel 9 development for the Market District as a whole.

In sum, we unequivocally support the Blackstone Market proposal for the redevelopment of Parcel 9 even though there are elements of its program – most particularly the plans thus far proposed for its first-floor retail uses -- which we believe could/should be further revised and refined as this project moves into and through the Article 80 design review process of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. We have great confidence based on experience that the Cresset/DeNormandie team will continue to engage with the community in a proactive and responsible manner on these and other outstanding matters as planning and permitting for this project continues beyond development designation. As part of that process, we would also reiterate our support for the timely and relevant suggestions outlined in the section of the Advisory Committee June 1<sup>st</sup> letter entitled *Some Concluding Requests and Recommendations*. These involve issues and opportunities related to the larger Market District context; and they will surely be among the matters that the Parcel 9 developer, as well as MassDOT, BRA and the community should address in a collaborative fashion well beyond the actual designation.

Finally, we would acknowledge that our position in this regard does not reflect the financial aspects of any of the Parcel 9 proposals, which were not made publicly available and which are understandably and appropriately a consideration for MassDOT. But we hope and expect that the financial aspects of these final two proposals will not prove to be the primary consideration involved in final developer selection. Just such an assurance was explicitly provided to us by Peter O'Connor of MassDOT at the outset of the extensive public process that was pursued under the aegis of the Parcel 7 & 9 Advisory Committee. In no small part, it was that assurance that provided the incentive and purpose for the thoughtful, systematic, inclusive, productive and time-consuming community planning efforts that ensued. And those efforts involved not just for the Advisory Committee itself, but also the countless members of the impacted and involved communities that made invaluable contributions to it with confidence in its ultimate substance and significance.

Unlike some other state agencies, MassDOT has the flexibility to take many factors into account beyond the highest financial bid; and we hope and expect that you will continue to do so in this final selection process. We also hope that community input has identified and promoted some even more important priorities than financial ones for the Commonwealth, for the City and for the community in the long run.

With appreciation for your usual thoughtful consideration of our views on these matters, we continue to look forward to the successful redevelopment of Parcel 9, the appropriate tenancy of Parcel 7, and the full realization of the Market District concept -- to all of which MassDOT has made invaluable and important contributions.

Sincerely,

Robert B. O'Brien, DNA Executive Director  
Member of the Parcel 7 & 9 Advisory Committee

cc: DOT Secretary Richard Davey and Governor Deval Patrick  
BRA Director Peter Meade and Mayor Thomas Menino  
Dana Levenson, John Romano and Roy Avellaneda of MassDOT  
Kairos Shen, Lauren Shurtleff and Jonathan Greeley of the BRA  
Senator Anthony Petrucci and Representative Aaron Michlewitz  
City Councilor Salvatore LaMattina  
Gus Serra of the Haymarket Pushcart Association  
The Blackstone Market and Haymarket Hotel Development Teams  
The Market Square and Boston Museum Development Teams  
Members of the Parcel 7 & 9 Advisory Committee  
Officers, Directors and Members of the Downtown North Association  
Other Interested Parties