Boston
Groundwater Trust

229 Berkeley St, Fourth Floor, Boston, MA 02116
617.859.8439
www.bostongroundwater.org

October 14th, 2020

Edward Carmody, Institutional Planner & Project Manager
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Simmons University Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) and Institutional Master Plan (IMP) Comments

Dear Mr. Carmody:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Simmons University Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) and Institutional Master Plan (IMP) which is located in the Fenway. The Boston Groundwater Trust (BGwT) was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of Boston where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by low groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

The document states that the Academic Campus is located in the City of Boston Groundwater Conservation Overlay District (Article 32 of the Boston Zoning Code). Article 32 requires that 1-inch of stormwater over the entire impervious area of the site be recharged into the ground. The stormwater system for the Living and Learning Center, Lefavour Hall and Main College Building will be designed to recharge 1.25-inches over the site impervious area to meet BWSC requirements. It is Simmons' intention to implement measures aimed at complying with Article 32 and BWSC.

The proposed below-grade construction will likely be performed within a continuous temporary steel sheet pile cofferdam driven into the impervious clay deposit. The perimeter steel sheet piling will provide a positive groundwater cut-off during the construction phase of the Living and Learning Center, which will minimize the impact of temporary construction dewatering performed within the limits of the Project site on adjacent properties. The excavation to construct the below-grade level will require temporary dewatering to construct the proposed structure in-the-dry. The dewatering will be short-term, and the effluent will be discharged legally off-site.

If the temporary dewatering is observed to have a negative impact on groundwater levels in the vicinity of the site, a temporary groundwater recharge system would be installed which utilizes the water collected in the construction dewatering system to restore the groundwater condition by means of recharge wells located outside of the steel sheet pile wall. The proposed below-grade perimeter foundation walls and foundation will be protected against groundwater intrusion by the utilization of a membrane type waterproofing. Note that continuous pumping of groundwater for the permanent building condition will not be performed, and therefore the Project is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on the groundwater level within or adjacent to the site.

Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Proponent will provide the BPDA, BWSC, and Boston Groundwater Trust with a letter detailing the elements of the Project which successfully achieve the critical GCOD requirement of no reduction in groundwater levels onsite or on adjoining lots. The letter will be stamped by a professional engineer, who is registered in Massachusetts.

As stated in the document and confirmed at the scoping session, the Project will coordinate with the Boston Groundwater Trust to protect groundwater levels in the area, and it will include the installation and/or monitoring of groundwater observation wells in the vicinity of the site before site excavation to facilitate monitoring of the groundwater level before, during, and following construction. In addition, the proponent will ensure that Trust observation wells installed in the public way along the Fenway, Palace Road, and Avenue Louis Pasteur will be maintained and accessible throughout the construction process.

I look forward to continuing to work with the proponent and the Agency to assure that this project can have only positive impacts on area groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Christian S. Simonelli

Christian Simonelli
Executive Director

CC: Kathleen Pederson, BPDA
Maura Zlody, EEOS