

**From:** Michael Muehe mmuehe@bostoncil.org 

**Subject:** BCIL opposes AAB Variance Application, 17 Hudson St., Somerville (V26-010)

**Date:** February 20, 2026 at 6:21 PM

**To:** William Joyce william.joyce@mass.gov, Griffin, Molly (DPL) molly.griffin@mass.gov

**Cc:** Bill Henning bhenning@bostoncil.org, isd@somervillema.gov, ada@somervillema.gov, Holly Simione hsimione@mac.com, Anderson, Doug douglas.anderson@rimkus.com

MM

Dear Board Chair Dawn Guarriello and Members of the Architectural Access Board (“AAB” or “Board”):

On behalf of the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL), I am writing to express our opposition to the variance application submitted on or about January 28, 2026, by Doug Anderson, Rimkus/C3 (hereinafter "Petitioner") for the new construction of two 3-story apartment buildings with 3 rental units in each ("Facility"), 17 Hudson St., Somerville (AAB Docket V26-010).

BCIL respectfully requests that this correspondence be included when the Board considers this case as part of its "Incoming Cases Docket" on Monday, February 23, 2026.

Petitioner's narrative included with this variance application is confusing, contradictory, and appears to contain multiple mistakes. At one point ("Requested Variance #1: 521 CMR 9.5.4 Accessible Route"), the narrative states that the "lower level of the multi-story unit is on an accessible route, served by the accessible entrance to the building." Elsewhere, the narrative indicates: "all basic living spaces on the upper level; kitchen, living room, washer/dryer, a bedroom and a bathroom" will be on an accessible route. Also, since the narrative confusingly uses the words "building" and "unit" variously in the singular and in the plural, it is unclear whether Petitioner is planning to provide accessibility features in both buildings, or only one building,

Furthermore, the narrative confusingly contains two variance requests labeled "Requested Variance #3" - one for 521 CMR 28.12 and one for 521 CMR 43.3.2.

Given that the total construction cost of this project is approximately \$2.75M, it would not be excessively costly without substantial benefit to persons with disabilities to initially provide vertical transportation within the ground floor dwelling unit of each building. The cost to install a vertical lift (approximately \$50,000 in each building) is quite modest compared to the overall cost of this new construction project.

Any arguments contained in the narrative that allege reduced market value and desirability should be disregarded by the Board. Since this is new construction, the architect could have easily designed this facility differently, e.g. with all flats, so as to avoid any alleged or potential marketability deficiencies. People with disabilities should not be forced to pay the price or bear any burden resulting from poor or thoughtless design choices.

Finally, BCIL strenuously objects to Petitioner's narrative citing proposed future changes to 521 CMR as justification for the design. These proposed changes are not currently in effect, have not received approval by the full Board, aren't even close to being promulgated, and therefore cannot be relied upon to justify noncompliance. The Board must evaluate this application using the accessibility code that is currently adopted and enforceable, not draft or anticipated regulations.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the AAB to deny this variance application. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. An acknowledgement of receipt of this correspondence would be appreciated.

Best regards

Best regards,

**Michael Muehe**

Access Analyst  
Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL)  
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Boston, MA 02111  
Mobile: 617-462-3110  
Pronouns: he/him/his



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**From:** Anderson, Doug <douglas.anderson@rimkus.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026 2:36 PM  
**To:** Joyce, William (DPL) <william.joyce@mass.gov>; Griffin, Molly (DPL) <molly.griffin@mass.gov>  
**Cc:** Bill Henning <bhenning@bostoncil.org>; Michael Muehe <Mmuehe@bostoncil.org>;  
isd@somervillema.gov <isd@somervillema.gov>; ada@somervillema.gov <ada@somervillema.gov>  
**Subject:** Variance Application, 17 Hudson Street, Somerville

Will,

Please find attached our request for variance. Check has been mailed. Thank you.



**Doug Anderson**

Code Advisory Practice Leader, Built Environment Solutions  
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