

MEMORANDUM

JUNE 10, 2021

TO: **BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**
D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (BPDA)¹
AND BRIAN P. GOLDEN, DIRECTOR

FROM: DEVIN QUIRK, DIRECTOR OF REAL ESTATE
KENNAN RHYNE, INTERIM DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DOWNTOWN &
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING
MARY KNASAS, SENIOR PLANNER
REAY PANNESI, SENIOR REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE A REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS FOR SOUTH COVE URBAN RENEWAL AREA PROJECT NO.
MASS.
R-92, PARCEL R-1, LOCATED AT TYLER AND HUDSON STREETS AND
HOLLAND PLACE IN THE CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD OF BOSTON

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests that the Secretary be authorized to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for the disposition of BRA-owned Parcel R-1 in the South Cove Urban Renewal Area, Project No. Mass. R-92; vacant land consisting of fourteen (14) contiguous assessor’s parcels of land located at 0, 50, 52, 54, 56 and 58 Tyler Street, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 55 and 57 Hudson Street and 0 Holland Place, in the Chinatown neighborhood of Boston (“Parcel R-1”).

THE PROPERTY

Parcel R-1, owned by the BRA, is 18,714 square feet of vacant land in the South Cove Urban Renewal Area, Project No. Mass. R-92, and consists of fourteen (14) contiguous parcels of land bounded by Harvard Street to the south, Tyler Street to the west, Hudson Street to the east and bordered to the north by the rear of 75 Kneeland Street, a fourteen-story, approximately 240,000 square feet, mixed-use building of predominantly office space. Parcel R-1 is identified by the following street addresses and with Assessor’s parcel identification numbers as indicated below:

Parcel ID#	Street Number	Street Name	Urban Renewal Parcel #	S q u a r e
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¹ Effective October 20, 2016, the BRA commenced doing business as the BPDA.

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0305238000	0	HUDSON ST	R-1
0305239000	0	HUDSON ST	R-1
0305240000	0	HUDSON ST	R-1
0305243000	0	HUDSON ST	R-1
0305241000	57	HUDSON ST	R-1
0305242000	55	HUDSON ST	R-1
0305244000	0	HUDSON ST	R-1
0305230000	0	HOLLAND PL	R-1

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0305236000	50	TYLER ST	R-1	0
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0305235000	0	TYLER ST	R-1	0
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0305234000	52	TYLER ST	R-1	0
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0305232000	56	TYLER ST	R-1	0
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				2
0305231000	58	TYLER ST	R-1	0
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				5
0305233000	54	TYLER ST	R-1	2

Parcel R-1 is currently licensed to Tufts Shared Services (“TSS”) for the purpose of parking for employees of Tufts Medical Center, which license expires on December 31, 2022. Tufts also licenses the privately-owned adjacent land that runs along the entire southern side of the Property as part of this Tufts employee parking area.

For zoning purposes, Parcel R-1 is situated within the Chinatown Zoning District in the Tyler Street Special Study Area Zoning Subdistrict and therefore is principally governed by the provisions of Article 43 of the Boston Zoning Code. The maximum height by right for a project subject to Article 43 at this location would be 125 feet, with a maximum floor area ratio (“FAR”) of 8. Parcel R-1 is also subject to the following overlays: IMP, Groundwater Conservation and Restricted Parking and falls within the Boston Proper Zone of the Parking Freeze Zone. The maximum building height established by the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) for this location is 340 feet, which would also be subject to Massport approval.

Parcel R-1 is the former site of the Chinatown YMCA bubble and is viewed by the community as one of the last large municipally-owned sites in Chinatown available for community-based uses. As such it has been the subject of community-based visioning workshops and planning studies for several years. Accordingly, BPDA's disposition of Parcel R-1 will require that development is in accordance with principles expressed in the 1990 Chinatown Community Plan, 2010 Chinatown Master Plan, the current Plan: Downtown planning process as well as in accordance with community workshops and studies which, will all be referenced in the RFP.

These principles include, but are not limited to the following: upgrade the quality of life in Chinatown to ensure its long-term viability as a historic residential neighborhood and a unique cultural, business, and service center; create a high percentage of affordable housing for all segments of the community; encourage community businesses and trades; diversify the neighborhood economy; improve employment opportunities for neighborhood residents; protect the district's historic and cultural resources; Improve the environment with open space subdistricts; manage institutional growth and establish boundaries for institutional uses; and promote the public safety, health, and welfare of the people of Boston.

COMMUNITY PROCESS

In order to gauge community support for the issuance of an RFP for Parcel R-1, the BPDA held two Zoom community meetings on November 17, 2020 and January 20, 2021 that included both Cantonese and Mandarin simultaneous translation channels and a PowerPoint presentation in both English and Chinese. Each meeting was followed by an additional Zoom "language access" meeting. These January 7 and February 3, 2021, Zooms were co-sponsored by the Chinese Progressive Association ("CPA") and were conducted in Mandarin and Cantonese with English translation, in order for limited English and non-English speaking residents to access this community process and express their feedback to the BPDA regarding Parcel R-1. All meetings were very well attended with approximately 100 or more attendees and followed by comment periods during which the community could submit comments by email, phone, letter and via the BPDA website.

BPDA staff drafted development guidelines based upon feedback and comments received from the November 17 meeting and its subsequent language access meeting and comment periods. The draft guidelines were posted on the BPDA website within the PowerPoint presentations in both English and Chinese and presented to the community at the January 20 meeting and its subsequent language access meeting.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES

Based upon community feedback and input, the development guidelines of the RFP will call for a mixed-use development with street activating ground floor uses and housing units above. The ground floor use that is overwhelmingly preferred by the community is a dedicated location for the Chinatown branch of the Boston Public Library ("BPL"). BPDA's real estate and legal teams are working with the BPL to include this use within the RFP in a way that is feasible and compliant with public bidding regulations.

The community is adamant that Parcel R-1 contain as high a percentage of affordable housing as possible, with affordability levels that reach lower levels of area median income to maximize affordability. As such, they would like to see the development provide both rental and homeownership units as well as a variety of unit sizes from compact units to larger, family sized units. Consistent with these preferences, the BPDA will require that at least fifty percent (50%) of the units in the development be income restricted, affordable units. In addition, proponents will be required to submit a Development without Displacement plan to demonstrate that their proposed project will not contribute to Chinatown losing current residents as a result of gentrification.

This RFP will contain the BPDA's Diversity and Inclusion language, requiring that proponents submit robust outreach plans for including minority-owned and women-owned businesses in all stages and aspects of the development and its ongoing operations. Evaluation of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan will account for twenty-five percent (25%) of the total evaluation of a submitted proposal.

Additionally, development guidelines will require that the building design be contextual with neighborhood scale and properly consider the buildings that surround it. Developments should also promote community open space, space for activities for seniors and youth, neighborhood jobs and economic development and community benefits. Urban Design guidelines will also promote green, sustainable design that takes into account sea level rise and moves towards carbon neutrality.

Proponents will be encouraged to be creative with the ownership models for the affordable housing created. The guidelines will also note that the community has expressed a strong interest in exploring the use of vehicles such as community land trusts in order to preserve housing affordability into perpetuity, as well as an interest in seeing proposals that include a governance role for community entities in the operations of the housing that is developed.

URBAN RENEWAL

The disposition and development of Parcel R-1 will be subject to the terms and conditions of the South Cove Urban Renewal Plan, as modified.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to create much needed affordable housing to help stabilize the Chinatown neighborhood and provide a variety of housing options for the community, as well as obtaining other long awaited neighborhood benefits, BPDA staff recommends that an RFP be issued for Parcel R-1.

Appropriate votes follow:

VOTED: That the Secretary be, and hereby is, authorized on behalf of the Boston Redevelopment Authority to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals for the

disposition of Parcel R-1, located at Tyler and Hudson Streets and Holland Place in the South Cove Urban Renewal Area, Project No. Mass. R-92 in the Chinatown neighborhood of the City of Boston; on terms and conditions substantially consistent with the board memorandum dated June 10, 2021.