

**MEMORANDUM**

**NOVEMBER 14, 2013**

**TO:** BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND  
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

**FROM:** KAIROS SHEN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING  
LARA MERIDA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING  
JEREMY ROSENBERGER, PLANNER  
TED SCHWARTZBERG, PLANNER

**SUBJECT:** DORCHESTER AVENUE ZONING UPDATE

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**SUMMARY:** This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the “BRA”) authorize the Director to petition the Boston Zoning Commission to adopt a zoning amendment to Article 65 (Dorchester Neighborhood District) of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”), to eliminate Article 52 (Dorchester Avenue Neighborhood District), and to adopt a map amendment replacing Maps 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5J, 5K and 5L, Dorchester Neighborhood District.

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**OVERVIEW**

The Dorchester Avenue Zoning Update seeks to consolidate Dorchester’s two zoning districts into a unified neighborhood zoning district, covering both the Dorchester portion of Dorchester Avenue and the Dorchester neighborhood. Revisiting and consolidating the existing zoning of Dorchester Avenue is an important step to ensure that the current momentum and enhancements to Dorchester Avenue are sustained for the future of the corridor.

**PROCESS**

Because of its prominence, Dorchester Avenue was the subject of a planning and rezoning process in 1992 that resulted in an updated zoning code for the portion of the Dorchester Avenue corridor in Dorchester. This process left the zoning for the Dorchester neighborhood to the east and west of the corridor unchanged. Subsequently in 1996, the BRA began the process to update the zoning code for the Dorchester neighborhood on either side of Dorchester Avenue which was completed in 2002. The Dorchester neighborhood rezoning included an extensive collaborative effort between state and city agencies, public officials, businesses, residents and community groups.

In 2010, the current initiative was launched to merge the two Dorchester zoning districts, so that Dorchester Avenue would no longer be treated by the zoning code as a separate neighborhood unto itself. A seventeen member Advisory Group was

appointed by the Mayor, comprised of residents, property owners, business owners and other stakeholders from the Dorchester Avenue community. BRA staff then commenced the community process, which included the following public meetings:

- Fall 2010: Neighborhood group presentations to civic, business and institutional organizations along Dorchester Avenue
- Winter 2011: Five public Advisory Group meetings and two public community-wide meetings to review existing zoning conditions.
- Fall 2011: Four public Advisory Group meetings and one public community-wide meeting to review updates necessary to incorporate Dorchester Avenue Zoning into Dorchester Neighborhood Zoning.

While all meetings were open to the public, community-wide meetings provided a broader overview of the process for those who chose not to attend monthly Advisory Group meetings. Each of the three community-wide meetings were advertised via e-mail, newspaper advertisements and a paper mailing to each individual property owner in the Dorchester Avenue zoning district.

## **OUTCOMES**

The proposed zoning changes resulting from Dorchester Avenue Zoning Update Initiative include:

- The incorporation of Article 52 (Dorchester Avenue Neighborhood District) into Article 65 (Dorchester Neighborhood District), thereby eliminating Article 52.
- The removal of inconsistencies in zoning districts, dimensional regulations, and usage guidelines between the Dorchester Avenue and Dorchester zoning districts.
- Map amendments to reflect current and potential future land use along Dorchester Avenue.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

BRA staff recommends that the Director be authorized to petition the Boston Zoning Commission to adopt a zoning amendment to Article 65 (Dorchester Neighborhood District) of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code"), to eliminate Article 52 (Dorchester Avenue Neighborhood District), and to adopt a map amendment replacing Maps 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5J, 5K and 5L, Dorchester Neighborhood District.

An appropriate vote follows:

**VOTED:** That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to petition the Boston Zoning Commission to adopt a zoning amendment to Article 65 (Dorchester Neighborhood District) of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code"), to eliminate Article 52 (Dorchester Avenue Neighborhood District), and to adopt a map amendment replacing Maps 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5J, 5K and 5L, Dorchester Neighborhood District.