

**MEMORANDUM****SEPTEMBER 12, 2024**

**TO:** **BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (BPDA)**  
AND JAMES ARTHUR JEMISON II, DIRECTOR

**FROM:** REBECCA TOMASOVIC, DIRECTOR OF REAL ESTATE  
NATALIE DEDUCK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF DISPOSITIONS  
YOON CHA, REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE AND ISSUE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AND GROUND LEASE OF 626-628 WARREN STREET IN ROXBURY

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**SUMMARY:** This Memorandum requests that the Secretary be authorized, on behalf of the Boston Redevelopment Authority Boston d/b/a Boston Planning & Development Agency ("BPDA"), to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals from qualified developers to redevelop 626-628 Warren Street in the Roxbury neighborhood

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### **DETAILS OF THE PROPERTY**

The Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA") d/b/a Boston Planning & Development Agency ("BPDA") requests authorization to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for the redevelopment and ground lease of 626-628 Warren Street, Parcel ID 12-02617-000, (the "Property"). Per the consensus of the surrounding community members established through a community process, the RFP will consider proposals for two types of development: (1) a residential development including affordable rental and/or affordable homeownership units with potential for commercial uses on the ground floor, or (2) a publicly accessible open space.

The Property consists of approximately 5,013 square feet of vacant land located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Warren Street and Sunderland Street in the Boulevard Planning District, Multifamily Residential Sub-District, abutting the Grove Hall Neighborhood Shopping Sub-District District in Roxbury. The Property

consist of flat green space surrounded by mature trees along the northwest edge of the parcel facing Warren Street and Sunderland Street. The eastern and southern edges of the parcel abut privately owned vacant parcels.

### **ZONING CONTEXT**

For zoning purposes, the Property is part of the Roxbury District as shown on Map 6A-6C of the Boston Zoning Maps, and therefore is principally governed by the provisions of Article 50 of the Boston Zoning Code. The Property is located in a Multi-Family Residential Sub-District.

### **COMMUNITY PROCESS**

BPDA staff held the initial community meeting on December 08, 2022. The community discussed a number of uses including a gathering place for residents to sit and have conversations, a sit-down restaurant, and homeownership residential units.

It was determined by BPDA Staff that a mixed-use development including a restaurant or retail use could only be achieved through the assemblage of the two, abutting, privately owned parcels; however, those are not included in this RFP offering. The community remained interested in the redevelopment of all three parcels, and an interested proponent with site control over those parcels may submit a development plan for the combined site.

The BPDA Staff held an additional three meetings to discuss the possibility of development on just the BPDA's parcel as well as development on all three. This led to the creation of an RFP that provides guidelines for either possibility to ensure that the community's interests were met. BPDA held a final meeting on September 27, 2023 outlining two sets of development guidelines. The community showed support for the plan because it creates a guaranteed pathway for affordable housing regardless of whether or not the adjacent parcels are incorporated in a proposal.

The Board authorized the release of the first RFP at the October 12, 2023, Board Meeting. On January 19, 2024, the BPDA released the first RFP. The development objectives of this first RFP allowed for proponents to submit proposals for residential or mixed-use development. On the deadline of the first RFP on February 19, 2024, the BPDA only received one proposal for open space. This proposal was

rejected for not adhering to the RFP's development objectives. Following community feedback, the BPDA now aims to incorporate open space as a possible use in the re-release of the RFP.

### **DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

The BPDA seeks creative and innovative proposals for two use types. The first type of development is (1) Housing or Mixed-Use. While all proposals are encouraged to improve the public realm through activation of the ground floor, Proponents who are assembling the Property with abutting parcels for a larger project are required propose a mixed-use project consisting of commercial use on the ground floor and residential use on the upper floors. The second type of development is (2) Public Open Space. Each use will have separate design guidelines which are outlined in following sections.

### **DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HOUSING OR MIXED-USE**

Design for Housing or mixed-use should meet the following Key Urban Design Guidelines:

1. The proposed design should enhance and complement the architectural characteristics of the area by carefully taking into consideration the existing building types, footprints, street frontages, height and architectural styles of the Grove Hall Business District. Architectural detailing should be executed using materials of the highest quality and be compatible with existing buildings in the business district.
2. The new construction on the Property should be innovatively designed and programmed to activate its frontage and reinforce the streetscape with thoughtful contributions to the public realm. The Multi-family Residential zoning sub-district limits the building height to 45feet and 4 stories. The proposed development should be compatible with existing building heights in the area and the design should recognize the visually prominent location of the Property.
3. Landscaping site improvements should include the use of loam and seed on all non-paved areas of the Property. New trees, shrubs and other plantings are strongly encouraged at both the property lines and within the Property.

Any exposed concrete foundation should be screened by landscaping treatment.

4. Existing mature trees over eight (8) inch caliper should be pruned and protected. New trees should be at least three and one-half inch (3-1/2) caliper.
5. Fencing type and height should be designed and selected in order to reflect location and function properly.
6. Disposal areas, accessory storage areas or structures and dumpsters should be placed at the rear of the Property and appropriately screened from view.
7. The selected proponent must repair and/or replace, as appropriate, any alteration or damage of existing sidewalks, paving, lights and street trees that occurs during construction.
8. Due to the planned redevelopment of the Warren Street bus lines, the Proponent must plan to work with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority ("MBTA") to provide space for a new bus stop shelter to be placed on the property.

In addition, proposed projects are strongly encouraged to include the following items from the Resilient Development and Green Building Design Guidelines:

- Green Building Certification
- Integrated Project Planning
- Site Development
- Transit Connectivity
- Water Efficiency
- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable, Clean Energy Sources and Storage
- Energy Efficiency Incentives
- Indoor Environmental Quality
- Sustainable and Local Materials
- Innovative approach in Sustainability

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR OPEN SPACE**

Design for Open Space Use should meet the following Key Urban Design Guidelines:

1. Improve sight lines and visibility throughout the Property to create a welcoming environment and support safety
2. Promote accessibility for handicapped individuals
3. Incorporate energy, soil, and water conservation measures
4. Promote the use of native species and avoid the use of any invasive plant species
5. Limit the use of impermeable surfaces
6. Prune and protect existing mature trees over eight (8) inch caliper to the extent possible. New trees should be at least three and one-half inch (3 ½ ) caliper and nursery pruned to a height that allows pedestrian passage below.
7. Design and select fencing type and height in order to reflect location and function. The proponent should be aware of the existing gardens and parks in the neighborhood for cues on fence type and scale.
8. Conduct any design changes with local community input through an appropriately advertised and documented process, to both gain input into the design and to engage the community in the future of the site.

In addition, the design should carefully consider the long-term maintainability of the space in the development of its details. Proponents must demonstrate their ability to adequately maintain the Property for the duration of the ground lease, including but not limited to the maintenance of:

- All proposed site features and furnishings
- Any proposed plantings and associated systems that may be required for their long-term health (irrigation, aeration, subsurface drainage)
- Health of all plants and their replacement as necessary
- Removal of snow and ice from pedestrian paths
- Keeping the Property clean and free of debris
- Emptying trash receptacles regularly, and
- Ensuring, generally, that the Property is a sustainable, safe, attractive and pleasant space for the public.

### **COMPARATIVE EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The BPDA will use the following Comparative Evaluation Criteria to compare the merits of all qualifying proposals.

1. Demonstration of the Ability to Execute the Project as Presented
2. Exceptional Design, Development Program, and Public Realm Contribution
3. Strength of Financial Offer and Finance Plan
4. Diversity and Inclusion Plan
5. Development Without Displacement Plan (for Housing proposals only)

To facilitate the evaluation of these criteria, the BPDA will take into account community input received as a result of developers' presentations.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Secretary be authorized to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals from qualified developers, for the redevelopment and ground lease of 626-628 Warren Street in the Roxbury neighborhood.

An appropriate vote follows:

**VOTED:** That the Secretary be, and is hereby authorized, on behalf of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the "BRA"), to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals from qualified developers, for the ground lease of the 626-628 Warren Street in the Roxbury neighborhood, on the terms and conditions substantially consistent with the Board Memorandum submitted at the meeting held on September 12, 2024.