

MEMORANDUM

JULY 16, 2013

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

FROM: KAIROS SHEN, CHIEF PLANNER
JOHN FITZGERALD, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER
HUGUES MONESTIME, SENIOR PLANNER
DANA WHITESIDE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: PARCEL 9 OF THE SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AREA;
PARCELS X-28A AND X-28B IN THE SOUTH END URBAN RENEWAL
AREA, PROJECT MASS. NO. R-56

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA") authorize the Director to: (1) issue a Scoping Determination waiving the requirement of further review pursuant to Section 80B-5.3(d) of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code") for the Parcel 9 Melnea Cass Project (the "Proposed Project") located on Parcels X-28A and X-28B in the South End Urban Renewal Area, Project Mass. No. R-56 also known as Parcel 9 of the Southwest Corridor Development Area ("Parcel 9"); (2) issue a Certificate of Compliance under Section 80B-6 of the Code upon successful completion of the Article 80 review processes for the Proposed Project; (3) execute and deliver a Cooperation Agreement, an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction, and a Boston Residents Construction Employment Plan, and any and all other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary; and (4) recommend approval on Petition BZC-32846 to the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeals for a conditional use permit and variances necessary to construct the project.

LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Parcel 9 of the Southwest Corridor Development Area (variously called "Parcel 9" and "Site") is located in the South End/Lower Roxbury section of Roxbury. It is comprised of Parcels X-28A and X-28B of the South End Urban Renewal Area, Project Mass. No. R-56.

Parcel 9 is an approximately 57,238 square foot (± 1.31 acre) vacant parcel. Parcel 9 is bordered by Washington Street to the east, Melnea Cass Boulevard to the south, Ball Street to the north and Shawmut Avenue to the west.

Parcel 9 is also located near Dudley Square, Roxbury's commercial and historical center, as well as the Lower Roxbury neighborhood on the northern side of Melnea Cass Boulevard. Parcel 9 is served by excellent roadway, public transit, pedestrian and bicycle networks. Parcel 9 has frontage on Melnea Cass Boulevard, linking it to Boston's regional highway network, including the Central Artery-Southeast Expressway and the Massachusetts Turnpike. The Site also fronts on Washington Street, a major roadway leading inbound to Downtown Boston.

Parcel 9 is along the Silver Line bus route of the Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority ("MBTA" or the "T") which connects to a full range of intermodal transit options provided by the MBTA to access points within the city and the region. Additionally the Site is along the South Harbor Trail accommodating pedestrians, runners, and bicyclists. Melnea Cass Boulevard is currently in an extensive design planning stage that will lead to a new redesign by the City Transportation Department. The redesign of Melnea Cass Boulevard is expected to also provide for the MBTA's Washington Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service within its right-of-way, further enhancing transit accessibility of Parcel 9.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The development team includes Melnea Partners, LLC ("Redeveloper") as the redeveloper; mod. A. Architect as the Architect of Record; NADAAA as Design Architect; D/R/E/A/M Collaborative as Urban Design Consultant; Landworks Studio as the Landscape Architects; Joseph Feaster, Jr., McKenzie Law PC as Legal Counsel; GeoSolar Energy Systems as Solar Consultant; Gibson Sotheby's International Realty as the realtor Marketing Agent; and Turnkey Development Inc. as the general contractor. Kamran Zahedi is principal of Turnkey Development Inc. and is in charge of the total operation of the construction activities. Urbanica, Inc. is the manager of the Redeveloper team.

Kamran Zahedi, the president of Urbanica, Inc., has for the past twenty-five years designed, developed and built many projects in Metropolitan Boston. More recently he has focused his efforts on Request for Proposals of city-owned historic buildings, and Request for Proposals of the BRA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation ("MassDOT"). Urbanica recently finished three publicly-awarded projects, a former police station in Somerville, the former Area D4 police headquarters in Boston's South End, and the Engine 1 Fire State in Belmont.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The Redeveloper has proposed a combined-use building for Parcel 9 including a one hundred forty-five (145) room hotel, ground floor commercial, restaurant and community space, fifty (50) units of mixed income rental housing, and underground parking for one hundred twenty-two (122) cars. The uses and gross square footage are as follows:

78,000 SF 145 room hotel
8,000 SF retail space
12,600 SF of shared and building core
41,600 SF of 50 residential rental units
45,100 SF of below garage with 122 spaces

ARTICLE 80 REVIEW

In 2013, Melnea Partners, LLC (the “Developer”) filed a Letter of Intent in accordance with the BRA policy regarding Provision of Mitigation by Development Projects in Boston and an Impact Advisory Group (“IAG”) was formed by utilizing the currently existing Roxbury Project Review Committee.

The Developer filed an Expanded Project Notification Form (“Expanded PNF”) for the Proposed Project on April 26, 2013 with the BRA and a Public Notice ran in the *Boston Herald*. This initiated a 30-day public comment period with a closing date of June 3, 2013. The Public Notice and Expanded PNF were sent to the City’s agencies pursuant to Section 80A-2 of the Code.

Pursuant to Section 80B-5.3 of the Code, a Scoping Session was held on May 14, 2013 with the City’s agencies at which the Proposed Project was reviewed and discussed. The IAG members were also invited to attend the Scoping Session. The BRA held a publicly advertised meeting on May 21, 2013 at the B-2 Police Station in Roxbury.

Very few letters were received in regard to the Proposed Project, and those that were, echoed support for the development heard at the BRA-sponsored public meeting.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Proposed Project will comply with the affordable housing requirements as described in the Request for Proposals and the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan, as well as the Mayor’s Executive Order for Affordable Housing.

ZONING

The Proposed Project is located within the Dudley Square Economic Development Area, subdistrict of the Roxbury Neighborhood District governed by Article 50 of the Boston Zoning Code. Variances include Height and Floor Area, as well as the bar with entertainment is a Conditional Use.

RECOMMENDATION

BRA staff believes that the Expanded PNF, project design changes meet the criteria for the issuance of a Scoping Determination Waiving Further Review. It is therefore recommended that the BRA approve the Proposed Project and authorize the Director to (1) issue a Scoping Determination waiving the requirement of further review pursuant to Article 80, Section 80B-5.3(d) of the Code; (2) issue a Certificate of Compliance under Section 80B-6 upon successful completion of the Article 80 review process; (3) execute and deliver a Cooperation Agreement, an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction, and a Boston Residents Construction Employment Plan and any and all other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary; and (4) recommend approval on petition BZC-32846 for variances and a conditional use permit necessary to construct the Proposed Project.

An appropriate vote follows:

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Scoping Determination under Section 80B-5.3(d) of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”), which (i) finds that the Expanded Project Notification Form submitted to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) on April 26, 2013 (“PNF”) adequately describes the potential impacts arising from the development of a one hundred forty-five (145) room hotel, ground floor commercial, restaurant and community space, fifty (50) units of mixed income rental housing, and underground parking for one hundred twenty-two (122) cars (the “Proposed Project”) to be located on Parcels X-28A and X-28B in the South End Urban Renewal Area, Project Mass. No. R-56, also known as Parcel 9 in the Southwest Corridor Development Plan, and provides sufficient mitigation measures to minimize these impacts, and (ii) waives further review of the Proposed Project under subsections 4 and 5 of Section 80B-5 of the Code, subject to continuing design review by the BRA; and

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Certification of Compliance for the Proposed Project upon the successful completion of

the Boston Zoning Code's Article 80 processes for the Proposed Project, subject to continuing design review by the BRA; and

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to execute a Cooperation Agreement, an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction, a Boston Residents Construction Employment Plan, and any and all other agreements and documents which the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Proposed Project, all upon terms and conditions determined to be in the best interests of the BRA; and

FURTHER

VOTED: In reference to petitions BZC-32846 for two (2) variances for Floor Area and Height, as well as one (1) conditional use permit for a bar with entertainment, the BRA recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISIO: that plans be submitted to the BRA for design review approval.