

**Collected Public Comments
PLAN: South Boston / Dot Ave**

June 28, 2016

Included in the following pages are a collection of 17 comments gathered from the community in response to the PLAN: South Boston / Dot Ave Draft Report between May 19 and June 23, 2016. Respondents included a number of private residents, advocacy groups, including the Livable Streets Alliance and South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation, and members of the PLAN: South Boston/Dot Ave Advisory Group (AG).

Residents/Business Owners/Property Owners

James Sappenfield
Michaela Rudis
Margaret Itri
Deborah Wrighton-Wex
Paul J. Credeen
Josh Johnson
Henry Davidson
Alan and Gary Saks (Icon Realty Trust)
Peter Welch

Organizations

Livable Streets Alliance
South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation
St. Vincent's Lower End Neighborhood Association*
City Point Neighborhood Association*
Gate of Heaven Association*
City Side Association*
Dorchester Heights Association*

Advisory Group Members

Stephen Gray
Gary Murad
Peter Welch (see above)
Donna Brown (see above)
Linda Zablocki* (see above)

*Joint letter

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Comments:

Page 6:

The introduction suggests a 10 year "sunset clause" on zoning allowances of 100-300 feet, after which the zoning will return back to 45 feet. For a 20 year vision, what is the reason for the 10 year sunset clause? Does that time frame support stability in property tax assessment for current industrial business owners (or will taxes increase based on new assessments)? How are community benefits ensured if development of certain blocks does not take place before 10 years (could we end up with a disconnected or incomplete public realm)?

Suggestions:

- With a 10 year aggressive timeline, a more detailed phasing strategy is suggested guide where and how new development and public realm amenities are located and funded. This plan is suggestive of open space locations but stops short of planting a flag or suggesting a phasing strategy.

Page 32:

Community comments from the beginning of the process... Most of these initial comments are addressed in this document with exception of considerations for the industrial relocation strategy and preserving the industrial context /character:

- *"More connecting streets and a possible new grid pattern need to be looked at carefully to allow traffic to flow through area and for pedestrians."*
- *"I would like to see some of the industrial character of the avenue preserved."*
- *"If the area changes to mixed use, where will the commercial/ industrial businesses relocate to?"*
- *"Dot Ave industrial days are behind them...Dot Ave should be mixed use – housing (preferably work force), commercial (possibly light industrial – that would include a storefront for more foot traffic, and retail."*
- *"Streetscape plan needed."*
- *"Open space...if mixed use project are built, open space needs to be part of overall vision."*

- Businesses: When rezoned, how will taxes be assessed for current land owners? Are there suggested locations for relocation or will there be an ad-hoc diaspora?

- Preserving character: What measures are being taken to preserve some of the historic character? Is there a process for assessing quality and character of historic masonry buildings, or will they all be demo'd for a tabula rasa area with all brand new buildings as in the seaport?

Suggestions:

Considerations for historic preservation are not currently addressed. Tax assessment and relocation/integration strategies need additional consideration. Consider dedicating more time to develop a strategy to preserve the historic character and transitions for existing businesses.

Page 80-83:

Show "ideal" or "proposed" framework for the Goals and Objectives / Land Use and Open Space to match community feedback on page 55:

- want larger park (show two block park through block open space from Dot ave to rail yard)
- want roads not to bisect larger park (show two block part undivided through block open space)
- want it to feel welcoming to all (show centrally and connected to multiple neighborhoods at D street)

Suggestion:

- Establish a TIF district for City to purchase parcels for large open space in near term (first phase) of implementation at or above market price to establish a clear framework for development

Page 56/57 and 64/65 and 102-105 and 156/157:

According to the figures in this report, only 9% of all available rental apartments in Boston are currently affordable by those making 50k (and only 5% of available units are affordable for home ownership) - this, while more than half of Boston resident households make less than 50k.

Suggestions:

- Add income breakdown for entire city of Boston and describe who and how many working people/families will have access to affordable housing options in this district (how does this rezoning meet a citywide need?) Someone making less than 50k is considered low income in Boston and this group makes up more than half of the population in the city. What about them?

- Bonus FAR might come with a requirement that developers meet affordability breakdowns that mirror the need for all Boston city residents. The current draft limits access to units in the new developments for those making below 50k to only 6% - which leaves out more than half of the city. (Affordability numbers and other figures are more useful when paired with the income demographic breakdown for the city of Boston - especially if the Dot Ave area plan is to address some of the city-wide housing availability and affordability by introducing 6-8k new units towards the 54,000 city wide target.)

- Adjust affordability range of inclusionary zoning from 70% AMI to include 60% or 65% AMI and to make this affordable for working class families of 2 -4 ppl at incomes of 50k per year (again, 6% does not include more than half of the entire pop of Boston).

- Create district overlay to incentivize micro-units to ensure additional affordability options. This will go beyond inclusionary zoning requirements and creates affordable options that retrain developer bottom lines and produce cooperative housing models (smaller units with market-rate cost/sqft have lower price points than larger units and support lower incomes). This is mentioned but neither incentivized nor required on page 86 "Use Zone 1B"

Page 84:

21st century industrial... The draft report lists a few examples for "Use Zone 1A," but stops short of proving development parameters (ideal footprint ranges, etc) that would accommodate or encourage these uses: "Examples of 21st century industrial uses include enterprises focused on green and clean technologies, renewable energies, smart grid, fuel cells would be well-suited. Incubators, small scale commercial kitchen spaces, limited contract or partner brewing, shared maker spaces for inventors of all kinds would also be appropriate. Other, existing, industrial uses should continue to be accommodated and supported in the district."

What are the range of business models and what are the requisite spaces/ building footprints needed? The proposed grid is a traditional residential module of 19th century South Boston, but may not be appropriate/ adequate for larger footprint co-working or maker spaces if 21st century South Boston. These spaces are often large, column-free, high ceiling, easily to retrofit spaces... Much like many of the existing industrial warehouses currently in the district.

Suggestion:

- Include more explicit descriptions and physical layout/ dimensions of "21st century industrial."

-Create policy incentives to retain industrial buildings that might accommodate 21st century industrial uses. Consider including additional language about integration and retrofit of some existing warehouses for 21st century industrial. (This also addresses preserving the historic character.)

Page 90-93/148:

Large open space

Suggestion:

Consider making it even larger, per community feedback, and ideally span two blocks in depth from dot ave to the rail yard. Both open space options should consider open space as two blocks deep (not only one block) spanning from dot Ave to rail yards for democratization of million dollar skyline views. Otherwise skyline views are relegated to luxury condos at top floors or to those walking along the service road.

Page 98:

Linear open space

Suggestion:

- Consider adjusting location. It is currently shown on the east side of the street. Show the linear park on the west side of the street for two reasons. 1) it will get east light and west shade for more comfortable use during warm weather months. 2) the higher density developments (300 ft towers) will be required to provide privately owned public space instead of the developers who develop with 100 ft envelope. This suggestion is practical from both implementation and public use perspectives.

- Consider stronger relationship between Dot Ave commercial blvd and linear open space. Right now the two are separated by one block which dilutes the activity.

- Also, in order to the linear part to function as Comm Ave (as described in the public presentations), there needs to be a destination (like Boston Common). Consider revising the linear open space to be more inviting to the public and destination-oriented.

Page 98/146/154:

Building setback are unclear for ground floor. They seem quite large along dot Ave -up to 35' (in orange) PLUS additional undefined setback (in purple) PLUS sidewalk = up to 45 - 50 ft setback!?! This seems excessive, even for a pedestrian-friendly street. Michigan ave in Chicago is only 25' setback from building face to the curb and includes generous streetscape, seating walls, and wide sidewalks for high intensity pedestrian traffic. On inner street along linear open space, there are only indications of minimum setback of 15 ft (in yellow) but no maximum setback.

Suggestion:

- Strongly suggest providing maximum setback as well as minimum to prevent suburban feel and support continuous urban street wall. 35' is probably the maximum you would want without creating a suburban setback.

Page 144:

Lot Coverage and Parking Strategy

Lot Coverage - 50 percent building lot coverage does not seem to create an urban condition urban unless the open space it is explicitly a part of an open space network OR located on the inner block behind buildings. Otherwise it could end up feeling like the seaport with podium buildings floating on blocks.

Parking strategy - Clearly identify certain streets that should restrict parking and parking access to provide continuous pedestrian experience. Currently, this is not clear.

Page 150:

Podium Guidelines

- Should include language about double-height ground floor space. This needs to be explicit to encourage visual and physical porosity as well as a wide range of commercial activity.

Page 162:

Add consideration for open space orientation in sustainability measures. Consider language such as:

"Guide all new street configurations and **[OPEN SPACES]** to be sited to optimize building solar orientation. Prioritize community facilities and amenities as well as open spaces for ideal solar orientation and sunlight exposure."

Page 162:

Suggestion to establish a TIF district to support short term (near term) large public open space. This space should precede development to ensure desired siting, scale, and orientation and to maximize public good while guiding first phase development. Phasing concept would be a good addition (even if conceptual) to suggest where development might come first. Establishing a public open space early on give confidence and direction to the market.

General Comments:

Document Organization: Consider moving the plan recommendations to the front of the document. Right now the process is described in the first 2/3 of the document. Some reading it may not realized that these were process-related diagrams and not the final recommendations. The process could be significantly reduced and included as an appendix.

Housing Affordability: This is an opportunity to "drive the market" instead of "react to the market" and step up affordability with higher building densities.

- More than half of Boston residents make less than 50k per year.
- There is a less than 3 percent city-wide vacancy. (Boston Housing Report Card)
- None of the land in the PLAN Dot Ave planning area is currently owned by housing developers, so the

BRA has maximum leverage in zoning for future housing needs.

- This area will be the largest contiguous housing development zone directly adjacent to Downtown. Is 19 percent affordability meeting this need of more than half of Boston residents?
- If we are deciding to up-zone to high densities in order to support more affordability and if 19 percent affordable is achievable for 100ft towers, then lets aim for 30 percent (or more!) affordable for 300ft towers.
- The Boston housing market is strong... which means the city (and public) have the most power to leverage new development. Southie, in particular, is the one neighborhood with the most new housing construction in the entire city, so let's be bold in our quest of greater affordability!

Another potential strategy for greater housing affordability: Many of those most in need of affordable housing are single mothers or single women (who require less space than traditional families). One way to ensure affordability - that goes beyond inclusionary zoning - is incentivizing micro units in Southie. The benefits are two-fold:

- Keep the same price per square foot for developer bottom lines, and
- Provide smaller square foot options at lower price points...

The Boston Society of Architects is planning a full scale exhibit at 90 Congress Street this summer of various micro unit types and common spaces at the BSA Space, as well as a mobile micro unit that will move through Boston neighborhoods and host overnight stays for public officials and residents. It's not publicized yet, but just another idea and a heads up.

Small Business Development: This is an opportunity to empower small business development (and support the desired market). If new zoning will require developers to provide ground floor commercial space on most blocks, it is critical that there be policy to support small business development and ensure that developer costs are justified and covered.

POP-UP Hood (Oakland CA case study): A social enterprise consulted to incubate small business and revitalizing neighborhoods, block by block. By rethinking retail and its role in renewal we engage community partners, property owners, businesses, municipalities and developers in participating in the global conversations of collective impact, and creative place-making. Through retail curation and marketing we activate previously vacant spaces transforming them into vibrant destinations. This programmatic approach to local economic development creates employment opportunities, pathways to permanent leases and increased livability in urban neighborhoods. The client list includes cities, Community Benefits districts, Business Improvement Districts, property owners, developers. <http://www.popuphood.com/>

- 1- Small business plans are improved through consultation.
- 2- Building Owners agree to rent space at "cost" for 6 months to 1 year for a new business.
- 3- If the business is successful, rent is increased towards "market rates." If it is not successful, another small business moves in to replace it
- 4- In either case, small business create vibrancy instead of vacancy

Final Thoughts:

I and other members of the AG have been approached by elected officials with the suggestion that there be an extension to this process. For context, the JP and Dudley Area Plans have both been extended by at least 3 months based on public/AG requests. Plan Dot Ave is perhaps the most important zoning change for Boston in decades (with city-wide implications on housing affordability and industry), I am open to extending the planning timeline by at least 3 months. A lot of great work that has been done so far, and we would be wise to take our time and get this right before bringing it to the BRA Board for a vote.

Name: James Sappenfield

Organization: n/a

Email:

Street Address: 609 Dorchester Ave, Unit R1, 02127

Phone: [\(813\) 241-7165](tel:8132417165)

Comments:

Hi, I love the plan for South Boston that I see so far. It looks like major improvements will happen in many ways. However, I would suggest increased heights / differential zoning to full 21st century mixed use all the way down the west side of Dorchester Ave in Andrew Square. The on thing that throws me off is that the triangle of Dorchester Ave, Boston St., and Father Songin Way is being kept to zoning of 60' height. Living in the square and in that triangle, it really seems that this section is prime space for larger development and a key portion of 'Andrew Square' (or at least more so than everything west of Boston St. which is marked for the 200 to 300 feet height limit and zoning). Much more commercial activity happens along this part of Dorchester Ave than Boston St, and traffic is MUCH heavier on Dorchester Ave. Upgrading the zoning in that triangle to the 200 to 300' zoning area would allow substantial development along the square. A second consideration is that owners in that triangle are also looking to sell to a developer if available, which should allow for smoother transition post-zoning if the developer can build to the appropriate height / use. From discussions with other owners in the triangle, most are interested in working together to make a sale easy. Additionally, if I remember correctly, the large parcel of land on which Andrew Square Auto Glass resides (at the tip of the triangle in the center of the square) was recently put up for sale. If this triangle were zoned to the highest zoning height, development here would be extremely attractive in the near future. Thank you, James (South Boston Resident)

Name: Michaela Rudis
Organization: Resident (Owner on Boston Street)
Email:
Street Address:
Phone:

Comments:
Hi Mary and Pat,

I am sending a couple of photos from Davis Square that I think are something to keep in mind for Andrew Square.

I like these demonstrations of commitment to aesthetics and livability in a six way intersection. Davis Square was committed to doing it right.

Also I meant to get back to you earlier with feedback in writing from the last presentation. And I just wanted to say that although it's great to see all the new ideas, the buildings are a bit disappointing to me. The whole look and feel of everything feels like big suburban office park. Kind of like Brighton. I personally didn't like that large boxy style with no real details. Or personality. I'm hoping we can do better than that in Boston over here in Southie.

Thank you for listening.



Michaela Rudis
Owner Boston Street



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Comments: Too many of the meetings were held the same nights as other neighborhood meetings preventing a lot of people from being able to attend. Mary Knasas was notified of this early in the process. She was also notified that the walking tour was scheduled for the SAME NIGHT as Cityside's Neighborhood monthly meeting. The meetings were more like workshops where games using poker chips were played - leaving little time for actual discussion. This process needs to be brought into the neighborhood with well advertised meetings at both the Condon and the Tynan on nights when there are no other abutter or monthly neighborhood organization meetings, with the whole plan laid out, not just facets of it. Summer is a good time for this as monthly neighborhood meetings are suspended. This project is too large and the process has been too narrowly focused with the same people in 'advisory' positions. No one from the Cityside Neighborhood Association, which abuts the project, was chosen to be on this advisory group but 2 people from City Point were. Finally, there seems to be a deliberate attempt to not focus on the two 20 plus story buildings and a published skyline view of these twin towers.

Name: Josh Johnson
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Street Address:
Phone:

Comments:

Hello:

Please consider this email in the official comment period regarding the South Boston Dorchester Avenue plan published in May 2016.

I appreciate the city's efforts in adding a significant amount of housing to alleviate housing prices.

I am concerned that the plan does very little to fix the transportation issues in the South Boston community and may in fact increase the problem. MBTA has no plans to increase red line or bus service in the South Boston community. The city of Boston needs to step up and provide reliable transportation to South Boston residents and stop relying upon the MBTA. Baltimore offers free shuttle routes in the downtown area (Charm City Circulator). This is urgently needed in the South Boston community. MBTA refuses to add additional bus capacity or practical bus routes despite the large increase in South Boston and Seaport population.

In addition, I am very concerned that all of the units in the study area will be luxury units and create further income inequality in the city. The city should mandate that at least 50% of the units be affordable or workforce housing. I was at a recent BRA presentation that said 25% of the units in Seaport are affordable or workforce housing. I have yet to find an advertisement for any of these units.

In addition, great care is needed to ensure complete streets is actually applied. Far too often I see uber/lyft drivers double parked in a bike lane or in an actual traffic lane. In addition, many drivers will park in the bus stop outside Broadway station in order to run into Starbucks or double park outside the dunkin donuts across the street from Broadway station. Any new retail or large housing developments need to have dedicated pick-up/drop off areas and 15 minute parking to avoid illegal parking and pick-up/drop offs that block busses and other traffic. In addition, city needs to double or triple BTD resources in the South Boston area as large number of parking violations occur here (non resident parking, parking in bus stop, etc). City should also consider not offering parking stickers to residents of these new buildings. It is waste of resources to subsidize parking for people at expense of bikers and walkers.

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Comments:

Very impressive work. I would recommend keeping green space dispersed throughout the development as opposed to large park lands. Green corridors along widened streets. The largely underutilized Joe Moakley Park could be better tied into the plan with signage, transport links and redevelopment of its facilities. The vast beach area in South Boston also affords ample open parkland. As a pedestrian who would access this area regularly, as I do now, I would like to see walking and pedestrian access to the area's facilities encouraged along with biking. This would add an element of further routine health promotion to the plan. Perhaps a Dorchester-to-Downtown Walkway designation with signage, public rest rooms and art elements. This could later be extended all the way out to Lower Mills from the Waterfront. That would be a world-class asset for many Boston neighborhoods to enjoy. Thanks for the opportunity to contribute.

Name: Peter Welch

Organization: PWG

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Comments:

I'm concerned that the plan to build is overly ambitious in such a small area. It will have a negative impact on the area changing the things that make South Boston unique to the the City of Boston. I would like to have further discussion regarding my concerns and given the proper amount of time to voice these concerns to the group and other residents and businesses that this project is sure to impact. Best, Peter Welch

Name: Deborah Wrighton-Wex

Organization: WBNA

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Street Address: 141 Dorchester Ave, #402, 02127

Phone: 617-331-0277

Comments:

I would like to add my support for the South Boston Dot Ave. Plan. The "Plan" will add much needed "Workforce Housing" in addition to adding neighborhood services and open-green spaces.

Name: Donna Penn

Organization:

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Phone: 617-697-5709

Comments:

Very nice, apparently comprehensive package. Although I may have missed it, in which case I apologize, I do see references to the light industrial nature of the area under consideration. However, the renderings of Dorchester Avenue and Old Colony Avenue provided in this report do not indicate any retention or elaboration of an industrial aesthetic in these proposals. These drawings, tho very nice, convey a shiny, new, urban condo, yuppie aesthetic just like Ink Block or many other of Boston's trendy new "neighborhoods." I think sanitizing the area of its industrial past (like has happened all along 1st Street in Southie), is will result in an aesthetically and intellectually incoherent fake neighborhood. Let's consider ways to preserve some of that edginess instead of eliminating it. It make for a more interesting and colorful and meaningful, relatable conceptual plan and reality. Thanks for all the hard work.

Name: Gary Murad
Organization: AG
Email: garymurad@gmail.com
Street Address:
Phone:

Comments:

Dear Mary, Viktorija, BRA Team, Elected Officials and Staff, and fellow IAG Members:

I know the "comment period" deadline was a couple days ago but as I said to Mark McGonagle it seemed a little strange to me that we had a comment period ending prior to the IAG meeting to have a discussion about the final draft plan so I am going to submit these comments anyway under the assumption and reasonable expectation that the comment period will be extended if not for the full 90 days as requested by a number of our elected officials and South Boston based neighborhood associations, but at least for a period for the IAG to digest what will be discussed next week.

Also I greatly appreciate Stephen Gray's comments from last week. Very thoughtful and raised a number of very interesting points, suggestions, and questions even.

Here are some of my thoughts.

1. As this is still a draft plan I think we should take a closer look at the incentive heights that have been discussed since the beginning. It seems to me going from 70' to 200' to 300' are big jumps in height and I would like to see those jumps be more gradual such as 70' to 150' to 200' to 250'. Which seem more reasonable in terms of height and also from a "stepping" perspective. Are we saying the only way we can get development in this corridor is to accept 300', highly dense buildings?

2. **Plan boundaries:** In regards to the boundaries of the Dot Ave Plan map, why does the northeast quadrant go half way down B Street towards Broadway??? Since the south side of B Street is occupied by the B Street Public Housing Development and there are only two developable parcels left on the northern side of the street (Mark Edwards proposal for Chuck and Anne's which fronts Dot Ave and extends down B Street by less than 100 yards, and Joe Hassle's proposal for 55 West 5th Street (E&S Auto at corner of B and 5th). As mentioned, since Mark Edwards project fronts Dot Ave, it makes sense that his project be in the planning envelope, but I can't understand why a large section of B Street would be in the plan envelope when there are no other parcels to be developed on that street. The border should be adjusted.

3. **21st Century Industrial** -I agree with Stephen Gray as it relates to 21 Century Industrial-we need to provide more explicit parameters for such structures to ensure construction of such marketable properties as well as what Stephen suggested in terms of creating policy incentives to retain industrial buildings that might accommodate 21st century industrial uses. Consider including additional language about integration and retrofit of some existing warehouses for 21st century industrial. (This also addresses preserving the historic character.)

4. **Large Open Space**- we should try to get the biggest possible open space that is feasible as this is a historic opportunity to provide open public green space in an area that will, if it happens, become one of the densest neighborhoods in the Northeast.

5. **Linear Open Space**- I agree with Stephen about moving it to the west side of the street and have it be destination oriented as that is what will activate-people using it to get from point A to point B and back again.

6. **Building Setbacks**- They can be generous without being overly generous, as in people still need to feel they are in the city when walking the streets. 25' to 35' seems plenty.

7. **Open space first**-I agree with Stephen that identifying and securing the location for the large open space will put a stake in the ground as it relates to future development in the area and all means should be exercised to acquire such a space as it will provide our current and future residents the confidence they need to have that the BRA will follow through with their plan-and promises are not broken.

8. Affordable Housing/Middle Income Housing-seems to me if we are going to allow for higher heights and density, that developers should be providing a higher percentage of housing that is affordable to people living on more moderate incomes. There is too much "luxury housing" being built in South Boston and the City as a whole. If the whole purposes of this exercise is to provide more housing units so the overall cost of housing comes down than this is the time to leverage the incentives being offered these prospective developers to ensure the housing that is being built contains at least 25% affordable and middle income.

9. Small Business Development: Again, if we are going to provide increased allowances for height and density as incentive to provide back to the community, then promotion of small business ownership through below market rental rates for commercial spaces or sale of those spaces is very important to the vibrancy of the corridor. We don't need another Boylston Street. We need commercial spaces that are affordable for people who want to own their own business that will provide badly needed retail and other services to the South Boston community.

10. Conclusion- The objectives of the Plan is to expand the South Boston neighborhood why ensuring that we remain livable, vibrant neighborhood with a great quality of life for all our residents. The key is to have a plan that produces SMART growth and that addresses existing deficiencies in both the housing market, infrastructure and transportation/mass transit not add to those issues. If all we get is very tall and highly dense/massive buildings, more people, more traffic, more pollution, worse transit services and continued ridiculously high rents and extremely high sales prices with minimal open space and poor public realm improvements than all of this will have been for nothing. Which is why I support a 90 day extension as proposed by our elected officials and a number of our civic organizations to make sure we get the best plan possible.

Thank you.

Mary Krusas

**Comments of Henry E. Davidson, Jr.,
Owner of 474 Dorchester Avenue and 57 Middle Street,
on the Boston Redevelopment Authority's
PLAN: South Boston Dorchester Avenue Report Draft**

The rapidly-growing city of Boston needs to significantly increase its housing stock. Our review of the draft plan for the Dorchester Avenue corridor (the "Plan") leads us to conclude that the Plan could do much more to solve this problem. The planning study area is bookended by key hubs on a major segment of Boston's transit infrastructure, the MBTA's Red Line. New housing adjacent to the West Broadway and Andrew Red Line T stations could put thousands of employees within a few stops of both the downtown Boston financial district, the South Boston Innovation District, and – just across the Charles River in Cambridge – the world's leading biotechnology cluster. Yet the Plan fails to permit development on an appropriate scale. Nor does it allow longstanding neighborhood businesses to adapt to a changing environment. Tapping into the full potential of this critical transit corridor would make a major contribution to moderating local housing prices, and would thus help Boston compete with peer cities for jobs, talent, and investment.

As a long-time landowner in the neighborhood, what happens in South Boston's Dorchester Avenue corridor matters greatly to me and my family. I have owned 474 Dorchester Avenue and 57 Middle Street since 1968. The property was originally the home of a Massachusetts corporation I owned called Babcock Davis Associates, which fabricated miscellaneous iron and light structural steel. I employed approximately 40 people at this location until 1984. 474 Dorchester Avenue and 57 Middle Street are now occupied by two industrial tenants: Kenseal Construction Products, a national distributor of waterproofing products and building materials, and Imported Foods, a provider of gourmet food supplies to restaurants in the greater Boston area. The two businesses together employ more than 30 people at this location. Both of these companies have been good tenants and are very successful.

Like my family before me, I take great pride in my properties since we are long-term owners woven into the fabric of the community. We hold our properties and continue to improve them until a higher and better use warrants a change in the property. My daughters and sons-in-law are now involved in the business and our mission remains the same. I make every effort to be a good neighbor. My tenants are required to keep the area around the buildings clean. I am the only abutter that has repaired the holes in Alger Street on a regular basis – at my own expense – for the last 15 years.

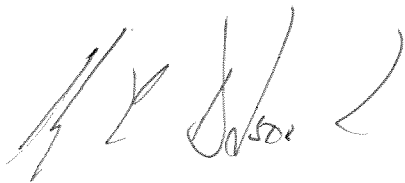
As long-term owners, it is crucial that we contribute to the development of the new vision for this important part of South Boston. I have been an active participant in the BRA planning process. My consultant, Randi Lathrop of RG Lathrop Consulting LLC, has attended all of the BRA planning meetings on my behalf. Early in the process, I submitted written comments about the area. I am deeply invested in what happens here.

I commend the BRA for the effort and commitment reflected in the Plan, and in particular for proposing significant density across large swaths of the study area. Nevertheless, the Plan denies many landowners in the study area the full economic benefit of the upzoning that is proposed for

the Andrew Square neighborhood would add much-needed housing to the area, supporting Mayor Walsh's admirable goal of building 53,000 new units in the City by 2030.

I hope that the City recognizes that, for small landowners like myself, the Plan both leaves me behind and stops me from catching up. As currently proposed, the Plan risks treating similarly-situated parcels in the area differently – which conflicts with well-established Massachusetts law on zoning. Even though my property is currently located in the same zoning subdistrict (M-2) as many other parcels in the area, the Plan proposes to rezone my land in an entirely different way. My property, plus the other properties given 60 foot bonus heights, should be treated similarly to the property owners in other parts of the study area. Therefore, for “transitional” properties like mine (i.e., ones adjacent to residential neighborhoods), I propose that the Plan be amended to allow a 70 foot as-of-right height, with a density bonus of an additional 70 feet, for a total permitted height of not less than 140 feet. If a 15-foot setback is required on a narrow lot like mine, we would be unable to take advantage of the bonus height. On my property, a more reasonable setback along Dorchester Avenue of 5 feet at 70 feet in height makes sense.

My proposal would ensure that legitimate neighborhood height concerns are addressed, but would not force me and similarly-situated landowners to make the choice between (a) leaving our property as-is in a changing neighborhood, and (b) redeveloping our property using zoning variances – which would be an unfortunate outcome right after the area is rezoned. If the Plan is adopted as it is currently drafted, however, this is a choice I will have to make. Refining the Plan as described above isn't just the right outcome for our corner of South Boston. It will unlock the potential of one of New England's most significant public infrastructure investments, the MBTA Red Line. Doing so will be a major step forward for Boston's overall economy, competitiveness, and quality of life.



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6-22-2016

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June 22, 2016

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

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Boston Redevelopment Authority
1 City Hall Sq., 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02210
Mary.Knasas@boston.gov

Re: *PLAN: South Boston Dorchester Avenue Planning Initiative (the "Plan")*

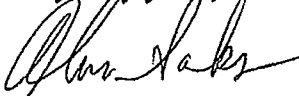
Dear Ms. Knasas:

We are trustees of Icon Realty Trust, which owns the property located at 421-423 and 425 Dorchester Avenue, Boston. As you may know, our property is located within the area subject to the Plan.

We are encouraged by the prospect for economic development that the Plan proposes for the Dorchester Avenue neighborhood. We note, however, that the Plan contemplates "a network of new streets, blocks and open spaces," including an extension of D Street that appears to bisect our property. We would like to better understand the City's plans with regard to the apparent creation of new streets not only on our property, but throughout the neighborhood. Specifically, we have concerns that the Plan will have disparate, and possibly adverse, market consequences for those properties affected by these new streets as compared to property not affected by the proposed street layouts.

We would appreciate hearing back from your office about how the Boston Redevelopment Authority plans to address these issues.

Very truly yours,



Alan Saks



Gary Saks

cc: Bill Linehan, City Councilor for District 2

June 22, 2016

Mary Knasas, Senior Planner
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201
Delivered by PDF to Mary.Knasas@boston.gov

Re: Draft Plan: South Boston Dorchester Avenue Report

Ms. Knasas,

LivableStreets Alliance would like to take this opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on the Draft Plan for Dorchester Avenue in South Boston. For the purpose of this letter, we've reviewed the Mobility & Connectivity section (page 112 – 127).

We thank you for the many elements of the design which appear to be well on track, including:

- Taking connectivity and network issues into account
- Incorporating the city's Complete Streets policies
- Aiming to accommodate Go Boston 2030's goal of reducing drive alone trips in the city by half
- Planning for a dense, walkable, bikeable, human-scaled street network
- Restricting additions to vehicular capacity
- Considering streets as places
- Recommending no additions to vehicular capacity on existing streets
- Proposing "protected intersection" design approaches at major intersections
- Planning protected cycling facilities on Old Colony Ave and the northern segment of Dorchester Ave
- Expressing interest in exploring exclusive bus lanes, transit signal priority, and que-jump lanes

We would like to highlight aspects of Complete Streets and other design policies that we think are important to adhere to as the plan progresses.

- Vehicle travel lanes should be as narrow as possible, in order to slow cars, increase safety for all road users, and create space for wider sidewalks, placemaking, transit, and bike infrastructure.
- Sidewalks with protected bike lanes "cycle tracks" should be designed in a way that make pedestrians and people on bicycles comfortable.
- There should be traffic calming measures on arterial and non-arterial streets.
- There should be measures to ensure smooth throughput for vehicles and bicycles.
- Provide safe connections to other neighborhoods for people walking and riding bikes.
- Parking policies should be progressive to separate housing and parking costs, incentivize people not to drive SOV, and provide car share.

Above all, we ask that these plans and ideas are integrated from the outset of any new development and not planned after the fact. We have learned from other places (i.e. Seaport) that transportation and street design is critical to get right at the outset. For examples of how these design policies could be better incorporated in the Plan, please see the attachment to this letter. Thank you for considering our comments as this planning initiative moves forward.

Sincerely,

LivableStreets Alliance

Cc:

Lara Merida, Deputy Director for Community Planning

Michelle Wu, Boston City Council President

Attachment

Vehicle travel lanes should be narrowed from the proposed designs. This will slow cars, increase safety for all road users, and create space for wider sidewalks and bike infrastructure. See comments on conceptual R.O.W. sections:

- Fig 128: Old Colony - curb to curb dimension should be 54'. 7' parking lanes and 10' travel lanes.
- Fig 129: Dorchester Ave - curb to curb should be 34' not 40'. Two 7' parking lanes plus two 10' travel lanes equals 34'. Use the excess to widen the sidewalk on the east side.
- Fig 130: D Street – Get rid of the median. Use the excess to create wider sidewalks for decent pedestrian space alongside the cycle tracks on both sides of the street.
- Fig 131: Southampton Street - Provide some sort of physical separation for the bus lane to help keep cars out. If that can't be done reduce the curb to curb to 50' and put the extra two feet into wider sidewalks.
- Fig 132: Ellery Street – curb to curb should be 34' not 40'. Two 7' parking lanes plus two 10' travel lanes equals 34'. Use the excess to widen the bike and ped zones.
- Fig 136: Boston Street - curb to curb should be 34' not 36'. Two 7' parking lanes plus two 10' travel lanes equals 34'. Use the excess to widen the sidewalks.
- Fig 137: Western Edge Road along the tracks - curb to curb should be 34' not 38'. Two 7' parking lanes plus two 10' travel lanes equals 34'. Use the excess to widen the sidewalk and the multi-use path. The multi-use path should be a minimum of 12' wide; 15' is preferable.
- Fig 138: Preble Street - curb to curb should be 34' not 36'. Two 7' parking lanes plus two 10' travel lanes equals 34'. Use the excess to widen the sidewalks.
- Fig 139: Typical East/West concept street section – narrow the lanes to 10' wide to both slow traffic and make it easier to take the lane when on a bike.

Sidewalks with cycle tracks should be designed in a way that make pedestrians and people on bicycles comfortable. Sidewalks with trees and cycle tracks should be at least 20' wide. 10' for people on foot, 5' for people on bikes, and 5' (at least) for green leafy things that can grow to be pretty big. Skimping on the planting zone leads to trees not being able to survive. Skimping on the pedestrian zone makes people on foot feel uncomfortable with people on bikes going past at a much faster speed.

Please refer to the MassDOT Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide. In [Chapter 3](#), page 30, the guide recommends: "For one-way separated bike lanes with low volumes of bicyclists (less than 150 per peak hour), the recommended width of the bike lane zone is 6.5 ft. (see EXHIBIT 3H). This is the width needed to enable passing movements between bicyclists. In constrained conditions where the recommended width cannot be achieved, the bike lane zone can be a minimum of 5 ft. wide. Where additional space is available, 6.5 ft. wide passing zones should

be provided.” Since we’ll be building new streets, this is an opportunity to provide cycle tracks of the recommended width.

There should be traffic calming measures on arterial and non-arterial streets, and measures to ensure smooth throughput for vehicles and bicycles.

Arterial streets should have curb extensions at all four corners of each intersection, median/pedestrian refuge islands (these can be in line with the parked cars), raised crosswalks at side streets, grade or curb separated bike lanes, and signal progression to allow a “green wave” so that people on bikes can catch green lights all the way. 15 minute parking should be included on each block for loading, pick-ups, and drop-offs during peak travel times to allow better vehicle throughput. At off-peak times these could be regular parking spaces. This would encourage double parking at non-peak travel times and help slow traffic similar to Newbury Street.

Non-arterial streets should employ similar traffic calming measures as arterials but with raised crossings, speed tables, speed humps, chicanes and other devices that the city would prefer not to have on arterials.

Fig 115 – get rid of the median and widen the sidewalks to provide more space for pedestrians, slow traffic speeds, provide better emergency vehicle access and possibly allow for sidewalk café seating, much like Fig 116. Who would plant, water, and take care of the planted median?

Provide safe connections to other neighborhoods for people walking and riding bikes.

Provide far better grade separated bike/pedestrian connections over the bridges to the South End – improve connecting streets in the South End, such as Berkeley. Also, provide grade separated bike lane on Dorchester Ave directly to Summer Street (assuming the Post Office moves somewhere else and Dorchester Ave is opened between Fort Point Channel and Summer Street).

The Harborwalk is too narrow to handle the number of bikes and pedestrians on it. Also, it does not serve people traveling to Downtown and it includes stairs that interrupt the trail as a bike route. It needs a separated bike lane connecting to it at Necco Court that runs into the Seaport District.

Parking is a huge stressor in South Boston already.

- Residential parking ratio of 1 parking space per unit is high in a Transit Oriented Development, plan for lower ratios in range of .3 at final build out.
- Provide car sharing services at larger residential buildings.
- Uncouple parking spaces from both residential and commercial units. Make people pay extra to have a parking spot to help discourage car ownership.
- Add “mobility hubs” several points throughout the area along the new bus routes – not just at the Red Line stations themselves.
- On-street bike parking must be included throughout the area as well as secure covered bike parking in both residential and commercial buildings. The secure bike parking must be at grade level or accessible via ramps. What would appropriate secure bike parking ratios be for residential and commercial units?

June 22, 2016

Ms. Mary Knasas
Senior Planner
Boston Redevelopment Board
1 City Hall Square
9th Floor
Boston Ma. 02210

Re : Dot Ave Plan

Dear Mary:

On behalf of the Association of South Boston listed below we would ask that the BRA extend the comment period for 90 days to look at adding the items below into your plan.

Review the following items:

Transit study review - opening of Dorchester Avenue from the Post Office into West Broadway and it's impact on traffic congestion and pollution into the South Boston Community. Study should focus on how density in the area will increase vehicular traffic as well as other traffic growth using South Boston as a bypass to the Highway from the waterfront and downtown Boston. Address the current traffic patterns and how increase in population and housing will affect the number of vehicles on South Boston Streets.

Conduct a study to include the MBTA Cabot Yard , repair facility , layover facility , Fourth Street Bridge, and all MBTA properties within the overall planning study . How will growth at these facilities affect density and vehicular congestion in South Boston.

MBTA Study to address current transit concerns and how to improve the transportation during the planning stages of the Dot Plan.

Study to look at height and density proposed . How will it affect the quality of life in South Boston and make rental units more affordable for the residents of Boston and especially South Boston.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

St. Vincent's Lower End Neighborhood Association
City Point Neighborhood Association
Gate of Heaven Association
City Side Association
Dorchester Height Association

Linda Zablocki



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South Boston, MA 02127
tel: 617.268.9610
fax: 617.268.4813

June 22, 2016

Mary Knasas
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Ms. Knasas:

I am writing regarding the South Boston Dorchester Avenue Planning Initiative. As the representative of South Boston NDC and the South Boston Association of Non Profits, I want to ensure that rental housing, affordable to those earning approximately \$20,000 to \$50,000, (30% to 50% of the Area Median income), is included in the final South Boston Dorchester Avenue Plan. While we applaud the city's stated goal (as cited on page 102 of the draft plan), that 6% of the units in the planning area be affordable to households earning less than \$50,000, we would still like to see a portion of the bonus densities allocated to housing for these households.

As you are aware, the land in the planning district is privately owned. As the land values continue to increase in this area, it will be difficult to secure a site to create low income housing. While middle income housing is an important community need, housing for low income working families is equally important. Over half of Boston's households earn less than \$35,000 annually. A 6% goal will fall well short of the need for this type of housing.

We look forward to continuing to work with the BRA and other city departments to find a way to build housing that is affordable to low income workers and to ensure that South Boston remains an economically diverse community with housing opportunities for all income levels. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Donna Brown

Executive Director

CC:

The Honorable Martin Walsh, Mayor

City Council President Michelle Wu

City Councilor Michael Flaherty

City Councilor Anissa Essaibi George

City Councilor Ayanna Pressley

City Councilor Bill Linehan

City Councilor Frank Baker

Congressman Stephen Lynch

Representative Nick Collins

Senator Linda Dorcena Forry

Brian Golden, BRA

Sheila Dillon, DND

Mark McGonagle, BRA

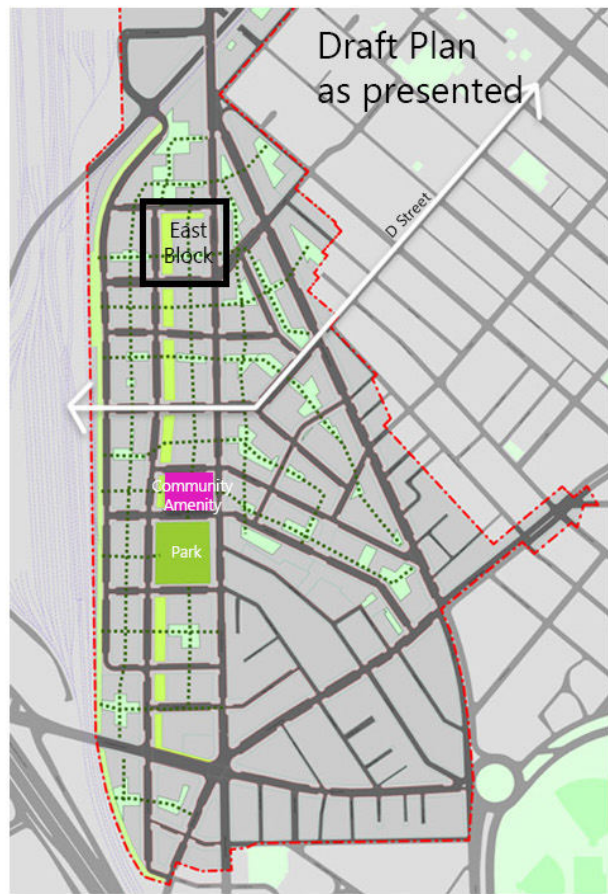
Tim Davis, BRA

John Allison, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

PLAN Dot Ave Draft Plan: Suggested Edits

Stephen Gray, AG Member

May 24, 2016



Open Space Suggested Edits

1 - Align Community Park and Community Amenity with D Street.

Benefits of change:

- Maximizes access for existing and new residents
- Positions Dot Ave development area with D Street and the larger city network towards the seaport
- Guides developers, creates a sense of place, and anchors a core
- Land assembly and finance by establishing a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF)

2 - Extend the park from one block to two blocks.

Benefits of change:

- Provides dramatic city views to entire community (not just for residents in 300 foot towers)
- Provides visual orientation for pedestrians on Dot Ave and invites them in
- Creates a larger gathering place for the neighborhood
- Slows traffic on inner blocks by dividing the street in half

3 - Move linear park from East blocks to West blocks:

Benefits of Change:

- Asks developers of 300 foot towers to finance and maintain linear parks (rather than 100 foot towers)
- Provides morning sunlight and evening shade to ensure comfortable use during warm weather months

4 - Create basic urban design guidelines for linear privately owned public spaces (POPS)

Benefits of Change:

- Urban Design Guidelines ensure continuity of movement, material palette, and uses along the entire stretch of linear park
- A la carte options are necessary to ensure that individual developers contribute to continuous and meaningful open space network



Edit image for 'Active Large Open Space' to show pedestrian access with a low seating wall and plantings along the sidewalk instead of chain link fence.



Old Colony Ave Conceptual R.O.W. D Street Conceptual R.O.W.

Consider separation of bikes and pedestrians with tree on D Street as shown for Old Colony.



Commercial Suggested Edits (graphic consistency)

1 - Show Two-sided commercial street near Andrew Square (as shown in the plan diagram)

Benefits of change:

- Creates a sense of place and commercial activity node with ground floor commercial uses in Andrew square
- Ensures that new development be required to provide ground level retail (some new developments currently under construction have been rezoned at ONLY residential despite commercial location)



Draft Plan as presented to the public



Suggested Edits (composite of all suggestions shown here in perspective and plan views).



Housing Affordability: This is an opportunity to “drive the market” instead of “react to the market” and step up affordability with higher building densities.

Facts:

- More than half of Boston residents make less than 50k per year.
- There is a less than 3 percent city-wide vacancy. (Boston Housing Report Card)
- None of the land in the PLAN Dot Ave planning area is currently owned by housing developers, so the BRA has maximum leverage in zoning for future housing needs.
- This area will be the largest contiguous housing development zone directly adjacent to Downtown.

Is 19 percent affordability meeting this need of more than half of Boston residents?

- If we are deciding to up-zone to high densities in order to support more affordability and if 19 percent affordable is achievable for 100ft towers, then lets aim for 30 percent affordable for 300ft towers.
- The Boston housing market is strong... which means the city (and public) have the most power to leverage new development. Southie, in particular, is the one neighborhood with the most new housing construction in the entire city, so let's be bold in our quest of greater affordability!

Small Business Viability: This is an opportunity to empower small business development. If new zoning will require developers to provide ground floor commercial space on most blocks, it is critical that there be policy to support small business development and ensure that developer costs are justified and covered.

POP-UP Hood (Oakland CA case study): A social enterprise consulted to incubate small business and revitalizing neighborhoods, block by block. By rethinking retail and its role in renewal we engage community partners, property owners, businesses, municipalities and developers in participating in the global conversations of collective impact, and creative placemaking.

Through retail curation and marketing we activate previously vacant spaces transforming them into vibrant destinations. This programmatic approach to local economic development creates employment opportunities, pathways to permanent leases and increased livability in urban neighborhoods. Our client list includes cities, Community Benefits districts, Business Improvement Districts, property owners, developers, and small businesses.

- 1- Small business plans are improved through consultation.
- 2- Building Owners agree to rent space at “cost” for 6 months to 1 year for a new business.
- 3- If the business is successful, rent is increased towards “market rates.” If it is not successful, another small business moves in to replace it
- 4- In either case, small business create vibrancy instead of vacancy

<http://www.popuphood.com/>