

June 30, 2017

Secretary Stephanie Pollack
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

COPY

Dear Secretary Pollack;

I write on behalf of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council concerning the disposition of seven parcels owned by MassDOT in Jamaica Plain. The Neighborhood Council is eager to work with MassDOT to fulfill the longstanding desire to see these 7 parcels returned to the community and recognizes MassDOT's willingness to hear the community's concerns, as is evident in the continuation of the community garden at 8 Oakdale Street. We hope that this feedback regarding the 6/7/17 Draft Outline of the RFP will be accepted in the same vein.

As MassDOT begins to work creatively with the City of Boston to increase the number of affordable housing units on these parcels, the Neighborhood Council would like to encourage both entities to reach 100% affordable housing on these parcels, especially in light of how these parcels were acquired. MassDOT has the opportunity to rectify the decision to acquire the parcels by eminent domain, which was made by its predecessor the Massachusetts Highway Department, by transferring the land to the City of Boston and allowing the city to work with the community to develop the land. We believe that this would increase the number of affordable housing units and would allow Boston's Housing Innovation Lab to explore new ways of thinking about land use in Boston. In addition, the Neighborhood Council wants the standard set by the Boston Planning and Development Agency in Plan: JP/Rox to be applied to these parcels as well. Specifically to set the average rent in income-restricted units as affordable to households at or below 50% of Area Median Income. Units intended for home ownership should be affordable to households at or below 70% AMI.

The Neighborhood Council also wants the abutters to these parcels, many of who have been caring for these parcels for years and in some cases decades, to be protected. There is a familiar, open, and transparent process for zoning relief currently in place in the City of Boston, which helps to ensure this protection. MassDOT should not be in the position of advocating for variances to the Zoning Code in order to complete the disposition of these parcels nor should MassDOT enter into an agreement with a potential developer that is contingent upon the modification, waiver, or wholesale reclassification of a specific parcel. Rather we would encourage MassDOT to include a "Clawback Provision" with all of the parcels and reserve the right to recoup additional monies if any variances are granted allowing a future owner to build above and beyond the current zoning provisions. This would ensure that MassDOT is able to meet its obligation to find

the highest responsible bidder while ensuring a public process for the abutters.

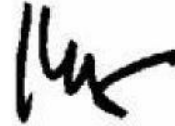
Finally, we would like language included that clarifies the “highest responsible bidder” as one who does not have a history of problem properties, eviction challenges, or failure to comply with Boston or Massachusetts housing regulations. In addition, we want to continue to encourage the community focus of the property owners in Jamaica Plain by including language that encourages owner occupancy.

The Neighborhood Council wants to further MassDOT’s efforts to dispose of these sites as quickly as possible while also addressing the concerns of the community. We would encourage MassDOT to schedule an additional meeting before the RFP is finalized. This could be a public meeting or a return to either the general meeting of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council or one of its Committees in order to discuss any changes to the RFP. At this meeting, we would also encourage the City of Boston and our elected officials to attend to ensure that all interests are addressed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin F. Moloney'.

Kevin F. Moloney, Chair

cc: Hon. Martin Walsh, Mayor
Mark Boyle, MassDOT
James Kersten, MassDOT
Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz
Representative Liz Malia
Representative Jeffrey Sanchez
Councilor Matthew O'Malley
Alexandra Valdez, MONS
Sheila Dillon, DND
John Dalzell, BPDA
Marie Mercurio, BPDA