

MEMORANDUM

MAY 16, 2013

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

FROM: KAIROS SHEN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
MARIE MERCURIO, SENIOR PLANNER I

SUBJECT: SOUTH HUNTINGTON AVENUE FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests the adoption of the South Huntington Framework for Future Development Review (“Framework”) as the framework for the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) and the community to guide future development within the South Huntington Corridor (“Corridor”).

BACKGROUND

In recognition of multiple recent development projects, and the individualized manner in which each of these projects were reviewed, a corridor study for South Huntington Avenue was initiated in December 2012 with the intent of developing a set of guidelines for new development. The South Huntington Framework for Future Development Review (the “Framework”) represents the culmination of this effort, establishing a comprehensive vision and unified set of guidelines for the review of projects, and the guidance of future growth.

The Corridor consists of the length of South Huntington Avenue from the intersection with Huntington Avenue in Mission Hill to the intersection with Perkins Street in Jamaica Plain. BRA Staff determined that the results of a study might be better organized if the Corridor were broken into three distinct areas or precincts. In addition to Corridor-wide recommendations, the Framework also includes recommendations that are tailored to each precinct, as each precinct is unique in its existing pattern of development.

Early on in the public process, the BRA set out to understand key priorities and issues from community stakeholders that included residents, business owners, property owners and developers. After several listening sessions, the feedback was used to inform a collective Framework of development guidelines for the future feel and physical character of the Corridor. The Framework also recommends action items and

specific timeframes to improve the public realm, address transportation needs, and to manage future growth. A key component of this vision is the agreement that additional growth in the Corridor is appropriate, provided that it follows specific guidelines established by the Framework.

Existing conditions are, in concert with zoning, the baseline to be used in future development review within the Corridor. Guidelines found in the Framework are neither a substitute, nor an amendment to the underlying zoning. Rather, they are intended to assist the BRA in administering the Article 80 Development Review process, and will also be the basis for the City when considering zoning variances that may be required to implement specific development projects. Guidelines primarily address the following areas: use mix, open space and connections, transportation impacts, development footprint, floor area ratio, and building height.

In order to achieve the full vision for the Corridor, the Framework makes provisions for public efforts to be aggregated with the contributions of private landowners and developers. Beyond typical mitigation measures determined through the Article 80 project review process, the Framework provides guidance for exceptional public benefits for cases in which a project exceeds underlying zoning, and is at the upper threshold of the recommended guidelines.

Implementation of recommendations from the Framework will be an ongoing process, dependent on the pace of large-scale development in the Corridor over the next 10 to 15 years. The types of public benefits that can be delivered along the Corridor, and at each development site, are dependent on the context of each site. Working with stakeholders through the Article 80 Large Project Review process, the BRA will tailor a package of benefits, above and beyond typical mitigation measures, that is both proportionate to impacts of the proposed project, and is consistent with local and Corridor-wide needs. The South Huntington Framework for Future Development Review shall serve as the primary guide for this process.

RECOMMENDATION

Accordingly, it is recommended that the BRA Board adopt the South Huntington Framework for Future Development Review as the framework for the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the community to guide future development and public realm improvements within the South Huntington Corridor.

An appropriate vote follows:

VOTED: That the Boston Redevelopment Authority hereby adopts the South Huntington Framework for Future Development Review as the framework for the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the community

to guide future development and public realm improvements within the South Huntington Corridor.