

**MEMORANDUM**

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2013**

**TO:** BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND  
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

**FROM:** HEATHER CAMPISANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT  
REVIEW  
DAVID CARLSON, URBAN DESIGN  
JOHN FITZGERALD, PROJECT MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** JACKSON SQUARE PROJECT, SITE II, PHASE 1 BUILDINGS D & F,  
JACKSON COMMONS, DEMONSTRATION PROJECT, JAMAICA  
PLAIN AND ROXBURY

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**SUMMARY:** This Memorandum requests: (1) authorization to establish a “demonstration project” under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B, Section 46(f) for the acquisition of a vacant parcel of land known as 1540 and 1540R Columbus Avenue, containing approximately 58,123 square feet (the “Property”), in the Jackson Square Project Area, from the city of Boston and to convey the Property to Jackson Square Partners, LLC, or related entity, as appropriate, for the Jackson Commons project (the “Project”); (2) adoption of a “Demonstration Project Plan” for the Project which grants the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the “Authority”) authorization to acquire the Property and to convey the same; and (3) the authorization for the Director to execute any and all documents necessary in connection with the Project.

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**BACKGROUND**

Jackson Square Partners, LLC (“JSP”) is a unique collaboration of three community-based non-profit organizations, each of which has a longstanding history in the Jamaica Plain and Roxbury neighborhoods: the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (“JPNDC”), Urban Edge Housing Corporation (“Urban Edge Housing”), and the Hyde Square Task Force (“HSTF”) (together, the “Proponent”). JSP will serve as the master developer of the Proposed Project and will have ultimate responsibility to the community, funders, and public agencies for ensuring delivery of the overall Jackson Square Development. JSP had designated the following developers for the originally proposed Phase 1 Projects: Mitchell Properties for 225 Centre Street; JPNDC and HSTF for the Youth and Family Center; and Urban Edge Housing for the DYS Facility, 1542 Columbus Avenue and 1562 Columbus Avenue.

By Memorandum of Recommendation dated September 29, 2005, JSP received a tentative designation (“Tentative Designation”) to develop the Public Parcels. JSP’s Tentative Designation was extended multiple times by votes of the Authority’s Board of Directors and is presently extended until December 31, 2013.

### **PROJECT SITE**

JSP proposes a phased mixed-use neighborhood development to replace a number of existing vacant and underutilized public and private parcels totaling approximately 11.2 acres located in the area surrounding the Jackson Square MBTA Station in the Roxbury and Jamaica Plain communities of Boston (the “Project Site”). The Jackson Square project’s design is based on a comprehensive community planning initiative involving hundreds of community residents, youth, and business owners from across Jamaica Plain and Roxbury. The Jackson Square project has been planned and designed to promote a healthy and sustainable pedestrian-oriented community that integrates the highest principles of smart growth, transit-oriented development, and green design. For planning purposes, the Project Site is divided into three sub-areas (“Sites I, II, and III”); Sites I and III are in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood and Site II is in the Roxbury neighborhood.

The site under review specifically is Site II, Phase I which is along the Roxbury side of the Columbus Avenue corridor to the corner of Ritchie Street, also known as Jackson Commons (the “Project”). The development of this site falls under the responsibility of the Urban Edge Housing entity of the overall Project Proponent Jackson Square Partners.

### **ARTICLE 80 REVIEW**

In 2010, the Proponent submitted a Notice of Project Change (“NPC”), which was approved by the Authority’s Board on April 13, 2010.

The Project will be a new mixed-use, mixed-income development that will integrate the existing three-story Webb Building with a four-story addition along Columbus Avenue with parking in the rear of the site. It is proposed to be approximately 58,600 SF total. It will consist of thirty-eight (38) mixed-income residential rental units at approximately 45,000 SF, with ground floor use consisting of approximately 13,600 SF. The ground floor area will function as a Neighborhood Learning Center and include the Urban Edge office, classrooms, computer room and space for other non-profit led programs. 4,500 SF of the ground floor area will be associated with the residential units above and include a property management office, resident resource coordinator office, laundry room, and a resident common room for residents of the building.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING BREAKDOWN**

Of the 38 rental apartments, 76% are family sized. The proposed housing program includes the following income mix:

- 21.6% affordable to extremely low-income households according to the city of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development homeless set aside requirement;
- 56.8% affordable to households earning up to 60% of the Area Median Income;
- 21.6% will be income restricted market rate apartments affordable to households earning up to 110% of the Area Median Income.

The Department of Neighborhood Development has acknowledged by letter that it will monitor the affordability of the units at the Jackson Commons Project.

## **DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

The Project will be constructed on vacant land owned by the city of Boston. The Department of Neighborhood Development (“DND”) has requested that the Authority accept the conveyance of its land and to transfer it the Jackson Square Partners LLC, or related entity. It is necessary to establish a Demonstration Project and to adopt a Demonstration Project Plan in order to accept the conveyance of the Property from DND.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is the staff recommendation that the Authority (1) establish a “demonstration project” under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B, Section 46(f) for the acquisition a vacant parcel of land known as 1540 and 1540R Columbus Avenue, containing approximately 58,123 square feet (the “Property”) in the Jackson Square Project Area from the city of Boston and to convey the Property to Jackson Square Partners, LLC, or related entity, as appropriate for the Jackson Commons project (“ Project”); (2) adopt a “Demonstration Project Plan” for the Project which grants the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the “Authority”) authorization to acquire the property from the City and to convey it to Jackson Square Partners LLC, or related entity; and (3) the authorization for the Director to execute any and all documents necessary in connection with the Project.

Appropriate votes follow:

**VOTED:** That the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the “Authority”) hereby finds and declares as follows:

- (a) To prevent and overcome urban blight by undertaking the acquisition of a vacant parcel of land known as 1540 and 1540R Columbus Avenue, containing approximately 58,123 square feet (the "Property"), in the Jackson Square Project Area, from the city of Boston, and to convey the Property to Jackson Square Partners, LLC, or related entity, for the Jackson Commons project (the "Project"), it is in the public interest to adopt a Demonstration Project Plan for the Project;
- (b) That in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30, Section 61, a finding and/or determination is hereby made that the Project will not result in significant damage to the environment and further, with the implementation of mitigation measures, that all practicable and feasible means and measures will or have been taken to avoid or minimize potential damage to the environment;
- (c) The undertaking of the Project requires the assistance of the Authority; and
- (d) Based on (a), (b) and (c) above, the Project constitutes a "demonstration project" under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B, Section 46(f), as amended; and

**FURTHER  
VOTED:**

That the Authority hereby adopts the following "Demonstration Project Plan" in connection with the Project: the Authority shall acquire a vacant parcel of land known as 1540 and 1540R Columbus Avenue, containing approximately 58,123 square feet (the "Property") in the Jackson Square Project Area from the city of Boston and convey the Property to Jackson Square Partners, LLC, or related entity. The Director is hereby authorized on behalf of the Authority to execute such instruments or agreements with Jackson Square Partners, LLC, and other entities as may be necessary to effectuate the foregoing Demonstration Project Plan, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B, section 46(f), as amended, and the Authority's role in the Project. The terms and conditions of all instruments and agreements shall be at the sole discretion of the Director.