

Dorchester Avenue Zoning Update

Background

Dorchester Avenue is one of Boston's most important boulevards. It runs over five miles providing a spine that ties together diverse residential areas and business centers that exemplify the richness of life in Boston's neighborhoods. Both private and public investment and revitalization efforts are currently underway in many places along Dorchester Avenue.

Because of its importance, in 1992 Dorchester Avenue was the subject of a planning and rezoning process that resulted in an updated zoning code for the portion of the Dorchester Avenue corridor in Dorchester, while leaving the zoning for the Dorchester neighborhood on either side of the corridor unchanged. Subsequently in 1996, the BRA began the process to update the zoning code for the Dorchester neighborhood on either side of Dorchester Avenue which was completed in 2002. The Dorchester rezoning was the result of an extensive collaborative effort between state and city agencies, public officials, commerce, residents and community groups.

The Dorchester Avenue Zoning Update seeks to consolidate the neighborhood's two zoning districts into a unified district neighborhood zoning district, covering both the Dorchester portion of Dorchester Avenue and the Dorchester neighborhood. Revisiting and consolidating the existing zoning of the Avenue is an important step to ensure that the current momentum and enhancements to Dorchester Avenue are sustained for the future of the corridor.

Objectives

The objective of the Dorchester Avenue Zoning Update Initiative is to:

- i. Provide zoning recommendations for the incorporation of Article 52, Dorchester Avenue into Article 65, Dorchester;
- ii. Correct inconsistencies regarding zoning districts, dimensional regulations, and usage guidelines that may exist between the current Dorchester Avenue and Dorchester zoning districts; and
- iii. Where appropriate, update the zoning along Dorchester Avenue to reflect current and potential future land use.

Process & Timeline

In fall 2010, the BRA met with stakeholders along Dorchester Avenue to discuss the objectives, proposed process, and timeline regarding the zoning initiative. The first community meeting to "kick-off" the initiative is March 9, 2011. Beginning in February 2011, the Dorchester Avenue Zoning Advisory Group will meet on a monthly basis to work with city staff toward developing overall recommendations for updating the zoning of Dorchester Avenue. Community update meetings will be scheduled to provide an update to the community at large and discuss the progress of the initiative. The result of the public process will be zoning recommendations based on the stated objectives of the initiative. The final result will be zoning regulations that reflect the opportunities and vision developed through the public process.

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