

## **Pier 5 RFP Process - Important Update November 22, 2021**

Greetings,

We wanted to take a moment to share an update with you regarding the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for Pier 5.

First and foremost, we want to thank every community member and stakeholder for your participation in the process and for submitting feedback and comments to us. We greatly appreciate everyone's thoughtful input.

After a lengthy review and serious consideration, we have decided to reject all three proposals. We look forward to continuing the dialogue through further collaboration as we work together to determine the next steps for the Pier 5 site.

The goal of the RFP was to determine if a public-private partnership was a viable and appropriate option to allow the pier to be demolished and achieve a productive community-oriented and supported use at Pier 5. The three proposals we received took extremely creative approaches to the challenges posed by the site. The BPDA is very grateful for the extensive time and effort each team took to respond. However, we have determined that they are not the right approach for this site at this time.

A few notes on the proposals we received:

- The floating housing concept introduced by two of the proposals is highly innovative, and could be useful in addressing the region's housing shortage, while also being highly adaptive to climate change and sea level rise. However, floating housing in this location would also be the first instance of floating housing on an open ocean harbor, which would make the safety of such a development a serious concern.
- We determined that the two floating housing proposals presented do not conform to the Charlestown Navy Yard waterfront regulatory requirements regarding adequate publicly-accessible open space, facilities of public accommodation, and special public destination facilities. Additionally, both proposals would inhibit the operation of Courageous Sailing to the point of infeasibility, and have not presented workable solutions for Courageous to maintain operations.
- The proposal by Urbanica was largely in compliance with the relevant regulations and planning documents, and we also found the proposed 100% affordable housing

use to be highly advantageous in an area with very limited affordable housing. However, financing the project would be extremely challenging given the large amount of public subsidy required from multiple sources, with high per-unit costs due to the cost of demolishing and rebuilding the pier. Housing on a non-floating pier structure also presents long-term resilience challenges due to sea level rise.

### **Advocacy for Open Space**

Throughout the past several months, the BPDA has received significant advocacy for the construction of a public park to replace Pier 5. The BPDA is highly supportive of public open space along the water's edge and ensuring access to the harbor. In fact, current State regulations for development on Pier 5 require a minimum of 51 percent public open space at the property and the inclusion of public facilities on the first floor of any built structures.

At this time neither the BPDA nor the City of Boston have plans to spend public funds to finance a park at Pier 5. However, the BPDA would enthusiastically support increased open space and/or park creation at Pier 5 through philanthropic or private financing. Should such a proposal emerge, the BPDA would be willing to accept an asking price of \$0 for the property if this was economically necessary to support additional public open space or other exceptional public benefits on Pier 5.

It is important to note that Navy Yard is already well served by public open space (e.g. Shipyard Park, Pier 4, Menino Park, and the Navy Yard National Historic Park) and there are areas in Charlestown, as well as other neighborhoods within the City of Boston, that are in greater need for public funding for park creation. Equitable public investment in open space must prioritize the needs of low income, diverse communities that currently lack adequate access to open space and face serious risks related to climate change. Given these social and environmental equity concerns, the BPDA believes that Pier 5 is an unlikely candidate for open space public funding.

### **The Path Forward**

At this time, the BPDA will consider all the feedback we've received and knowledge gained through this RFP process, as well as consulting with the new mayoral administration, to determine what the next steps should look like on this site. Thoughtful community engagement that takes into account the voices of nearby abutters as well as the needs of all Bostonians impacted by decisions at this site will be central to the BPDA's approach.



We want to again thank you for the continued collaboration and remain very committed to working closely with the Navy Yard and broader Charlestown community to determine the best course of action for this important property. Should you have any further questions please don't hesitate to reach out to us at any time.

Sincerely,

The BPDA Real Estate Team