



Request for Information

Housing with Public Assets



City of Boston
Mayor Martin J. Walsh



NEIGHBORHOOD
DEVELOPMENT

Dear Boston Residents, Developers, and Visionaries,

We at the City of Boston are always exploring ways we can improve core city assets - such as our libraries, fire stations and community centers - quickly and efficiently. We also care about housing, and for the city, that means integrating deeply and moderately affordable units with market-rate units.

We think that redeveloping, rehabilitating or rebuilding city assets with housing and other mixed uses might give the people of Boston improved structures, better services, and more housing opportunities. We want to hear from you: Where should housing and public assets be combined, and what might it look like?

We invite you to respond to this Request for Information with your ideas about how housing and public assets can be combined for public benefit. Your participation -- or lack thereof -- in this RFI does not help or hurt your chances of partnering with us in the future.

After the submission period ends we may invite respondents to tell us more about their ideas. We may also showcase responses at a public event so you can tell us what you think about the ideas we received. These steps will help us better understand if this type of development makes sense for the City and where in the City we should pursue it.

To be very clear, a Request for Information allows the city to explore new ideas without committing resources to a particular concept. A Request for Information is a call for input only. Responses will inform conversations about how our public assets can be redeveloped for enhanced public good. This Request for Information does not replace or interrupt the normal community process. Should the City choose to pursue any specific development ideas, we will engage in a public process with local residents and community members.

Thank you for your interest, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

The City of Boston

[Goals]

We suspect that updating city service infrastructure, thoughtfully integrating multiple uses in a single site, building more housing, and making housing more affordable will better serve our communities.

We want to identify projects that help us achieve these goals:

- 1. Revitalize and Restore City Assets** City assets can have maintenance and redevelopment needs that outpace funding. Creative development that accesses private financing and involves the co-location of services with other uses might help mitigate this reality.
- 2. Build Housing** We want to add 53,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030 - that's the city's overarching goal, and we're working with many partners to reach this- and we want to see how utilizing city assets may help us get there.
- 3. Promote Affordability** We don't want to simply trade in our city assets for luxury apartment buildings. We want to promote affordability and make Boston accessible for all, by providing housing for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households, all of whom are finding it difficult to find housing they can afford.

[Our Assets]

The city owns hundreds of parcels of land and hundreds of buildings. We have shortened this list to reflect the breadth of assets that the City owns while excluding some assets which may not yet be viable for this kind of project. We have intentionally included a large list to solicit the broadest degree of feedback possible, and we do anticipate that some parcels on this list may not be appropriate for this type of redevelopment at this time.

We are most interested in proposals that identify how city assets currently used for core city services can be combined with housing. Libraries, fire stations, and community centers are good examples of the capital assets you will find on our [primary asset list](#).

A number of the included buildings are historically significant. In those cases we expect preservation will be addressed in your proposal. In all proposals, we expect to hear about how you might make the concept contextual to the city and the neighborhood.

Municipal parking lots are examples of assets on our list of [secondary assets](#). This list also includes some city parcels which are under-utilized or not actively used. Where it makes sense to do so we invite you to consider relocating assets currently on the primary list to sites on the secondary asset list, or expanding primary asset buildings or properties to

include secondary assets. If you choose to relocate any existing city assets onto a secondary parcels, you must explain why the move would serve the local community and create a public benefit. We are **not** simply interested in learning about which City parking lots are good sites for condominiums or apartments.

We created a [map](#) of the primary assets and secondary assets for your reference.

[Our Perspective]

While we are on track to meet our Imagine Boston goal of building 53,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030, we also know there is more work to be done. We want to create and capture value for our citizens by offering housing where we need it, while improving city assets.

Our nationally-recognized [Housing Innovation Lab](#) (iLAB), part of the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics and the Department of Neighborhood Development, is leading this RFI. The iLAB is transforming how Boston designs, develops and funds housing, and has been creating housing solutions in collaboration with many diverse constituencies at the City, in our communities, and across industries. We recognize that the concepts we are proposing here will require considerable innovation and collaboration, and believe that the iLAB is well-positioned to move this work forward.

We want to hear from you about the opportunities and barriers you see to these types of development; this will help us break down those barriers and create new opportunities for creating public value.

Appendix A describes what we want to see in your response, and Appendix B describes the timeline for responding to this RFI.

We invite your creative thinking on how to use City assets to deliver greater public value by combining housing with city services and operations.

We look forward to your responses and thank you for your interest.

[Appendix A: Responses]

Introduce Yourself and Your Ideas **up to 3 pages**

Please tell us more about why you are submitting a proposal and what about your background qualifies you to make this recommendation.

Tell Us Where **up to 2 pages**

Provide a ranked list of primary assets and secondary assets you would be interested in. Please provide commentary for each selected site indicating why it is interesting to you.

Project Concept **up to 5 pages per representative proposal**

Please provide submissions for the sites you have ranked that are representative of the types of developments you might consider. Strong submissions will have a narrative around what you are proposing and why you believe it meets our goals as a City and the needs of the communities involved in your concept. We would also like to learn more about why you think this project has not been pursued already and the barriers to completion you believe are most relevant. We want to know how your suggested developments would be designed, financed, owned, operated and procured.

Submissions must restore existing city assets back to their current footprint and meet the relevant Department's design and programming needs as outlined in Appendix C. Proposals that don't meet the specific design and programming guidelines should provide strong justification for how the proposal will deliver the same or greater public value despite the deviations.

Multiple sites may be combined in a single site as long as no city service is removed from a neighborhood. Respondents may consider re-locating, co-locating, or combining multiple city assets in one site as long as the relocated assets continue serving the public and local community as intended.

The most compelling concepts will include the following:

1. Narrative: opportunities and barriers
2. Conceptual designs and drawings
3. Management & operational responsibilities
4. Financial back-of-the-envelope projections & key assumptions
5. Other considerations:
 - a. spatial design to appropriately differentiate city services from housing
 - b. design that complements the existing context/streetscape

- c. levels of affordability in rental and ownership units
- d. parking allowances
- e. green space
- f. where applicable, the preservation of historic assets

[Appendix B: Timeline and Process]

Submission

2/1/18: RFI made available

2/12/18: Questions about RFI must be submitted to marguerite.cramer@boston.gov

2/15/18, 11:30AM: City hosts applicant conference at 26 Court St, Boston

2/27/18: Consolidated Q&A released

3/23/18: Submissions due to marguerite.cramer@boston.gov

Follow Up

3/30/2018: City may request for you to come in for an interview

4/5/2018: City will publicly post next steps

[Appendix C: Department Guidelines]

Do not contact any departments directly with questions. Instead, email marguerite.cramer@boston.gov.

The following general guidelines provide broad departmental needs. At a minimum all proposals must maintain or expand existing footprints and facilities, or provide strong justification for why the proposed design meets City and community needs.

Boston Public Library

Boston Public Library provides educational and cultural enrichment free to all for the residents of Boston, Massachusetts and beyond, through its collections, services, programs, and spaces.

Modern Libraries typically best serve the public with one continuous space on the first floor level, with direct and visible street-level access, a dedicated entrance with large signage, direct delivery access, and easy access to facilities infrastructure including restrooms.

Boston Fire Department

The Boston Fire Department was created in 1678 and has consistently provided high quality fire protection and prevention services throughout the years while striving to be in the forefront of best practice in firefighting methods, medical and technological advancements, fire science, training, hazmat, and technical rescue.

Modern firehouse designs must isolate and protect firefighters from the dangers of prolonged exposure to carcinogenic particulates. New construction and significant rehabilitation should incorporate a Red Zone (containing the particulates), a Yellow Zone (a transition zone), and a Green Zone (the clean or living/sleeping space).

*Note that a Firehouse may contain as many as one (1) company such as Engine 49 on Neponset Valley Parkway to up to five (5) companies such as an Engine, a Ladder, a Rescue, a District Chief, and a deputy chief.

Boston Public Health Commission

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is the country's oldest health department and the governmental public health agency for the City of Boston. The mission of the BPHC is to protect, preserve, and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable. The BPHC strives toward this mission with an 1100 staff workforce operating over 40 public health programs, grouped into six bureaus: Child, Adolescent & Family Health; Community Health Initiatives; Homeless Services; Infectious Disease; Recovery Services; and Emergency Medical Services.

The BPHC provides a range of critical public health services, including enforcement of public health laws, investigating and containing disease outbreaks and environmental public health hazards, eliminating barriers to quality healthcare, and supporting opportunities for health by addressing policy and environmental changes where residents work, live and play.

Proposals involving BPHC parcels should at a minimum replace the existing facilities so current programming can continue to operate.

Boston Centers for Youth & Families

Our goal is to provide quality programs that enrich the lives of residents and meet the needs of the community. Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) offer affordable programs for residents of all age across the City. Our programs are focused around four key areas: arts; community and civic engagement; education; and sports, fitness, recreation and health.

Proposals involving BCYF parcels should at a minimum replace the existing facilities so current programs can continue operating.

Property Management Department

Our goal is to ensure that the City's municipal buildings are welcoming, vibrant, and safe for all employees, residents, and visitors.

The Property Management Department (PMD) maintains our buildings in a welcoming, vibrant, and safe condition in a fiscally responsible manner and helps preserve these assets well into the City's future. In addition to hosting employees from City Departments, PMD

leases premises to a variety of other governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, and commercial retailers (tenants). Proposals involving PMD properties must be cognizant of the programming within each property, and consideration given to ensure that the programming and legal obligations are not be negatively impacted.

Public Works

We ensure that Boston's streets, sidewalks, and bridges are safe, clean, and attractive.

We are responsible for a range of buildings and facilities with a range of uses. Specific site plans should replace the existing facilities so current uses can continue.

Department of Neighborhood Development

We work with communities to improve Boston's neighborhoods through investing public resources. Our main jobs are to create housing options, support tenants, foster homeownership, end homelessness, and manage the City's real estate.

We use land owned by the City as a source for new housing, and work with communities to find the right sites for affordable housing. We also make federal and local funds available to support affordable housing. All proposals must meet our underwriting policies and our standards for accessibility, sustainability, good design, and community support.

[Appendix D]

This RFI is for information and planning purposes only and shall not be construed as a solicitation or as an obligation on the part of the City to issue any competitive procurement or award a contract.

The City will not award a contract on the basis of responses to this RFI nor otherwise pay for the preparation of any information submitted, for any vendor presentation, or the City's use of such information.

All responses to this RFI will be public record under the Massachusetts' Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. L. ch. 66 s. 10, regardless of confidentiality notices to the contrary.

By submitting, applicant authorizes the City of Boston to publicize, refer to, and use your application as it sees fit.