



Consolidated Q&A

Housing with Public Assets



City of Boston
Mayor Martin J. Walsh



NEIGHBORHOOD
DEVELOPMENT

Summary of Key Questions

Housing with Public Assets Consolidated Q&A

Question

Why did you choose the properties you did?
Why didn't you include [x]?

I am considering a transaction with a parcel near one of the assets listed. Should we wait to see what will happen with the RFI?

What kind of ownership structure should we propose?

We own adjacent land and buildings - can we submit a proposals that incorporate adjacent land and buildings?

Can we get additional information about [site x]?

Will applicants' submissions be used for future RFPs?

Do you have a compilation of some examples of best practices that City can put out?

Answer

We opted for a broad list of assets that reflect the City's portfolio. All departments will have a chance to learn from the RFI submissions even if they were not included in the text of the RFI.

The RFI is exploratory. We have not committed to any specific next-steps besides analyzing submissions and sharing them with the public.

We are looking for your ideas. Propose to us what you think is a compelling partnership for you and for the City.

Absolutely! We are open to reviewing creative proposals.

Useful links:
[Court St and City Hall](#) master planning
[City datasets](#)
[Tax Parcel Viewer](#)
[BPHC site information](#)
[BFD site information](#)

Our hope is that submissions can provide the City with indications of interest & your perspective on major barriers without compromising intellectual property. Submissions will be public information.

We invite you to research some of the examples we have studied in other cities - Chicago held a design competition for housing and libraries; DC combined housing with a firehouse and library; NYC is working on several libraries with housing and is leveraging philanthropic funds to do it. San Francisco has pursued this in and around transit. Even smaller cities such as Alexandria, VA have pursued this type of development.

All Submitted Questions

Housing with Public Assets Consolidated Q&A

Question

What does the City envision for fire stations?
Will they remain as fire stations?

Answer

We are interested in incorporating fire centers with housing or other uses without changing the location or operational capacity, although technically we could consider new locations if it made sense, as fire stations are strategically placed for response time. Combining housing or community centers with Fire Stations has been done in cities like DC and Alexandria, VA.

The Boston Fire Department (BFD) is particularly interested in trying to mitigate cancer risk through redevelopment. Redvelopments should contain contaminants in a specified apparatus bay, with separate space for living/"day" activities.

Is there a source of information (map, etc.) for the response area of certain fire stations?

The best rule of thumb is that where it's located now meets the community needs.

It sounds like a goal of the RFI is to preserve City assets. In the case of parking lots, where some might be more utilized than others, is there flexibility around preserving the entirety of the lot vs. reconfiguring it to add, for example, housing?

We are first thinking about the primary public asset sites. However, there are creative ways to work with the parking lot. Sites may include new parking configurations with uses on top.

Will data.boston.gov have information about utility costs in buildings?

Many of buildings currently need efficiency upgrades. Access building energy metrics [here](#).

At the moment there aren't any RFPs planned. Will applicants' submissions be used for future RFPs?

Submissions will be public information. Our hope is that submissions can provide the City with indications of interest & your perspective on major barriers without compromising intellectual property.

Question

Is it the intention that additional housing provided be exclusively affordable housing?

Answer

There are diverse examples of how this could work, and we are interested in seeing what applicants think is most viable. For example, NYC built a luxury hotel over a library redevelopment; the hotel funded the library redevelopment, but we are not convinced that such a project is right for Boston given our goal of 30/30/30 low, middle, and market-rate mixed-income development.

Is the priority improvement of the public assets or is the priority creation of affordable housing?

We are trying to balance the two. The “right” balance will depend on the specific parcel and community needs.

Do you have a compilation of some examples of best practices that City can put out?

We invite you to research some of the examples we have studied in other cities - Chicago held a design competition for housing and libraries; DC combined housing with a firehouse and library; NYC is working on several libraries with housing and is leveraging philanthropic funds to do it.

Are the actual addresses of the assets available online somewhere?

The RFI links to the primary asset list and the secondary asset list. Each list includes an address. If you have trouble accessing any of these documents please email margo.cramer@boston.gov.

What about municipal buildings? Should we assume all floors are 100% utilized or does the City think some of these buildings might not be at full capacity?

You can assume fire stations, libraries, and community centers are fully utilized; there would need to be thinking around how to incorporate, at minimum, what is used there now. For other municipal buildings, this may not be true. For example, 26 Court St is not fully utilized and the City has begun master planning around redeveloping City Hall and Court St. Master planning information is available [here](#).

Is there similar information available about BPHC buildings, usage, and capacity?

Additional information about BPHC buildings is available [here](#).

Are there site plans available (for conceptual planning purposes)?

Additional detail about some sites are available for [BPHC assets](#) and [BFD assets](#).

Question

After submissions—what happens next? Does the City have a timeline for when it might release RFPs?

Answer

We are looking to build a consensus externally and internally about whether this concept makes sense. If appropriate, we could use our learnings to develop RFPs in the future. We can't say exactly when this would happen, but we can say that any future RFPs will follow a normal community process.

To confirm, the individual RFIs submitted will be made public?

Yes. They will become public information and will be publicly available.

Does the BFD have budget or program data around their existing renovations regarding the cost associated with a fire station renovation?

The cost of renovating Engine 50 at Winthrop St in Charlestown is \$3.8 million. BFD is in the process of redeveloping Engine 42 on Columbus Ave to add an additional story for living. That project is estimated to cost \$23.6 million.

For networking purposes, will the sign-in sheet from the applicants' conference be made public?

We encourage attendees to network after the applicant conference.

We are close to selling one of our assets that is immediately adjacent to one of the City owned lots included in the RFI. Before we move forward it would be incredibly helpful to learn more about the RFI to determine whether or not we should hold off.

The RFI is exploratory. We have not committed to any specific next-steps besides analyzing submissions and sharing them with the public.

Also can you provide an explanation about why the BWSC properties are being excluded?

We opted for a broad list of assets that reflect the City's portfolio. All departments will have a chance to learn from the RFI submissions even if they were not included in the text of the RFI.

I'm inquiring about the plans and specifications. Are they available electronically and can be emailed? Are there union requirements for the job? And an estimate project value/budget?

These questions are not relevant to this RFI, as no specific project is planned.

Is there a list of applicants for the RFI for this project - and if, so is it possible to obtain a copy of that list? Does your department maintain a list of those groups who have expressed interest and, if so, is this public information?

We do not have a list of potential applicants but we will release RFI submissions to the public.

Question

We were planning to launch a redevelopment of an asset adjacent to one the Primary Assets. Our goals align nicely with the goals of the RFI and we are beginning conceptual design for the project any. Have you given any thought to utilizing private sites in addition to the public assets?

Also, we would like to secure a floor plan of one of the buildings (26 Court Street) for our planning, and wondered if you can send us that, or steer us to where we might get a floor plan?

What time are submissions due by 3/23/18?

It would be helpful to know if the city's plans would be to sell the properties or retain ownership.

What will the ownership and tenancy structure look like?

Answer

Absolutely! We are open to reviewing creative proposals.

Useful links:
[Court St and City Hall](#) master planning
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Submissions are due at 11:59 PM on 3/23/18 to margo.cramer@boston.gov.

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