

Staff Report to the Board *November 20, 2019*

Administration

CRA Staff have begun reviewing applications for the part-time Finance Director position. It is anticipated that in the future some of the CRA's financial practices and reporting procedures will be adjusted to meet the growing complexity of the work underway. Additionally, the CRA's technology systems have grown more complex with more online tools. Staff participated in a cyber-security training and are beginning to implement stronger security practices to protect the organizations computer systems and digital files.

Forward Calendar

1. Designer Selection for 93-99 Bishop Allen Drive
2. Real Estate Consultant Selection for Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House Project
3. Schematic Design for 135 Broadway
4. Update on 325 Main St Design and Construction
5. City / CRA Workforce Development Report
6. Finalize 2020 CRA Budget

Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

The CRA has advertised an RFP seeking a real estate financing consultant to assist in the project planning for the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (MFNH) redevelopment project, with a specific focus on utilizing funding sources available to social service providers and childcare facilities. This will build off the initial work conducted for the CRA by HR&A Advisors which focused on the financial feasibility of the housing program.

The MFNH has hired a new Executive Director and has recently engaged in a program evaluation process that will help define their future space needs. These efforts have shifted the timing of our project as outlined in the previous Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and thus will require an amendment to that agreement.

KSTEP

The Kendall Square Transit Enhancement Program (KSTEP) was created under the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan and as an element of the MEPA review for the 2015 Plan Amendment. CRA staff are working to launch the KSTEP Work Group which is designated as the technical staff to bring recommendations to the CRA Board and the City Manager for transit project funding utilizing KSTEP. The CRA will be presenting the governance structure to the Cambridge Transit Advisory Committee in December and will provide opportunities for funding suggestions to be made. CRA staff have also identified some early project ideas. Together

these funding proposals will be reviewed by the KSTEP Work Group and evaluated against the KSTEP goals, before recommendations are brought to the CRA Board.

93-99 Bishop Allen Drive

The CRA is conducting interviews with design firms for the renovation of the office building. Key design issues will be improving accessibility and general circulation, improving the heating and cooling systems, and improving the overall efficiency of the layout to increase office space utilization. It will be a complicated construction project as the building is fully occupied. The CRA is considering providing swing space for certain tenant needs. Staff have been conducting meetings with tenants to better understand their existing and future needs in the building.



Grand Junction

CRA staff are active participants in the City's planning efforts regarding the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path. The consultant team for the City is designing the pathway design and the various intersection crossings, each of which presents a number of technical challenges. The intersection with Main Street and Binney Street is of particular interest to the CRA, while the route across Broadway is already incorporated into the Broadway protected intersection design work completed by the CRA and Boston Properties.

The CRA has also been very involved in the effort to promote future transit use on the Grand Junction rail line. The City's pathway design work has been scoped to not preclude future double track use of the corridor for rail transit. MassDOT and the MBTA have been conducting a multi-year planning effort entitled RailVision to explore scenarios to improve and expand the commuter rail system. A number of the scenarios included a transit shuttle link between Allston and North Station along the Grand Junction. This month, the MBTA Fiscal Management Control Board voted to broadly endorse an electrified, regional rail plan that presumably includes the use of the Grand Junction corridor.

