

Staff Report to the Board: *April 12, 2023*

Personnel and Hiring Updates

Staff Transitions and Hiring

The CRA welcomed back Senior Planner Fabiola Alikpokou on Monday, April 10th following her parental leave which began in December. We are excited to have Fabiola back at work and leading and supporting a variety of our planning and infrastructure development efforts.

Job postings for a Project Planner and Senior Project Manager or Project Manager closed in recent weeks. The CRA received a very competitive pool of applicants for these positions, with over 35 applications for the Project Planner position and over 25 applications for the Senior Project Manager / Project Manager positions. CRA staff are currently interviewing candidates for the positions, with the intention of hiring candidates who can join our Planning and Development team in late May or early June.

The CRA continues to advertise for the Director of Finance and Operations position. Applications for the position are due on April 17, with the intention of hiring a candidate who can join our Leadership team in June.

Finally, the CRA is also in the process of conducting interviews for part-time Engagement Coordinators who will facilitate community engagement related to the Rindge Connectivity project. Job postings for these positions closed in late March. The Engagement Coordinators will focus on designing and implementing strategies to engage residents of the Rindge Tower Apartments and Fresh Pond Apartments.

Forward Calendar

- Annual Transportation Report
- Bishop Allen Close-Out
- 75 Ames Street M1 Certificate of Completion
- MFNH Option Agreement
- Strategic Plan Adoption

Project Updates

Forward Fund

Applications for 2023 Forward Fund Feasibility Study Grants opened in January, and the deadline for consideration in the first round of review is April 21st. At this time, the CRA has not received any completed applications for the Feasibility Study Grant program, though several eligible organizations have expressed interest in pursuing funding for capital improvement projects. This summer, we plan to move forward with a call for applications for our larger Capital Grant program. The Feasibility Study Grant application window will remain open to allow applicants for Capital Grants that would benefit from first undertaking a formal feasibility study of their project the opportunity to do so.

Grand Junction Corridor Transit Feasibility Study

CRA staff continue to work with the WSP consultant team in conducting a feasibility study of introducing transit service on the Grand Junction Corridor. The project kicked-off last fall and has involved a significant data collection effort alongside a process to define the potential transit alternatives the team will be evaluating. WSP will evaluate feasibility considerations including transit mode, station locations, grade crossings, single vs. double-tracking, and ultimate origins and destinations of the transit service beyond Cambridge. Staff from the City's Community Development Department are also providing input on the technical approach and engagement undertaken to support the effort, with engagement expected to begin in late spring. Delivery of the final feasibility study report is scheduled for this fall.

Annual Transportation Report

CRA staff have been working with the VHB consultant team since last fall to create our Kendall Square Annual Transportation Report for 2022. The team is close to delivering a full draft of this year's report to CRA staff, including interactive digital Story Map web pages that will be available on our website. The final report is due to be presented at the CRA's next Board meeting in May.

MXD Update

Biogen has submitted a new application for their 125 Broadway tank proposal to the Planning Board. A hearing date is still being scheduled. The new proposal aligns with the CRA Board's input, and staff will continue to follow the City's review progress to ensure design alignment.

CRA staff expect to receive construction documents (CDs) for the 290 Binney Street commercial project and the 121 Broadway residential project by the end of the month. These CDs will be reviewed by the City as building permit submissions. Sasaki's design of Center Plaza is also progressing. Staff had a chance to meet with the design team last week, and we look forward to scheduling design review meetings and other public conversations to review the designs later this spring and summer.

Foundry

The next meeting of the Foundry Advisory Committee (FAC) will be held on Friday, May 5th from 9:30-11:00 AM in Shop 6 at the Foundry. The meeting will be hybrid and the Zoom link can be found on the CRA website. Michael Shia resigned from the FAC in March to move to the Foundry Consortium board, which leaves one vacant spot on the FAC.