



August 12, 2019

Lisa S. Wieland, CEO
Board of Directors
Massachusetts Port Authority
One Harborside Drive, Suite 200S
East Boston, MA 02128

RE: Parcel H Request for Proposals

Dear Ms. Wieland and Members of the Massport Board:

MACDC is an association of mission-driven community development organizations dedicated to working together and with others to create opportunities for people with diverse interests and backgrounds to access housing that is affordable, benefit from economic opportunities, and fully participate in the civic life of their communities. We write to you on behalf of the twenty CDCs that are in and serve the City of Boston's neighborhoods, whose voice in MACDC is represented through MACDC's Boston Committee.

We are concerned about the lack of diversity in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood and propose a way to address the problem: amend RFPs for land disposition. The December 2017 Boston Globe Spotlight Series identified that the residents of the South Boston Waterfront do not reflect the economic, racial and ethnic diversity of our city, largely because the cost to live there is very expensive. In addition, a recent survey by the Conservation Law Foundation found that 25% of non-white respondents felt un-welcome to the South Boston Waterfront, as compared to 6% of white respondents.

As one of the largest landowners in South Boston, Massport is responsible for the majority of new development of the South Boston Waterfront. Developers of some of those residential developments, including Waterside Place Phases 1 and 2 and Parcel K, have cited the costs of developing on Massport land as a hardship reason for reducing or eliminating on-site affordable units. The result has been a lower percentage of affordable units on-site in South Boston Waterfront developments and a corresponding lack of diversity. Cost of land is clearly an obstacle to the development of affordable housing.

With its recent Parcel H RFP, Massport missed an opportunity to address the need for affordable housing in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood. The RFP requires compliance with the City of Boston Inclusionary Development Policy, but that yields only 13% affordability. Pressure to maximize ground lease payment requirements adds to the development cost, making it difficult for developers to increase the percentage of affordability.

While we applaud Massport's commitment to diversity and inclusion in terms of the development teams, we will not have true diversity on the South Boston Waterfront without a significant commitment to affordable housing on these sites. Those developers, architects, and contractors will make their money and leave the neighborhood when they complete their projects.

We challenge Massport to match the City of Boston's commitment to developing affordable housing on public land and develop incentives for developers to go beyond the City of Boston's IDP program. When City of Boston owned parcels and buildings are up for disposition, the RFPs clearly state that, for affordable housing, those parcels will be sold for a nominal fee. Much of the South Boston Waterfront is under development, leaving little opportunity for additional affordable housing.

We hope Massport will consider amending the Parcel H RFP to address this great need for affordable housing in our city. We would like an opportunity to meet and discuss our concerns with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Shirronda Almeida, Interim Executive Director
MACDC
(617) 379-5923



Donna Brown
Executive Director, South Boston NDC
MACDC Boston Committee Co-Chair



Leah Camhi
Executive Director, Fenway CDC
MACDC Boston Committee Co-Chair

cc: Brian Golden, City of Boston Planning and Development Agency
Sheila Dillon, City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development
Congressman Stephen Lynch
Senator Nick Collins
Representative David Biele
City Councilor Michael Flaherty
City Councilor Ed Flynn