

RANDOLPH REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

BUSINESS PLAN AND PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTING THE URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

CREATED ON DECEMBER 18, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHO WE ARE

The Randolph Redevelopment Authority (hereinafter “RRA”) was established under M.G.L. chapter 121B by a vote of the Town Council in December 2016.

The RRA consists of five appointed members each of whom must be a Randolph resident. Four members are appointed by the Town Manager with confirmation by the Town Council; the remaining member of the authority is appointed by the Commonwealth. The Town provides a list of nominees to the Department of Housing and Community Development (hereinafter “DHCD”) who will pass that list up to the Governor’s office for appointment.

CURRENT AUTHORITY MEMBERS

- Arthur G. Goldstein
- Arnold Johnson
- Maureen Pasquantonio
- Sean M. Fontes
- Paul Meoni

WHAT WE DO

In an effort to encourage sound growth and to revitalize urban areas that are substandard, decadent or blighted open space, the legislature developed an urban renewal program under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B. Municipalities are authorized to develop blighted areas for residential, recreational, educational, hospital, business, commercial, industrial or other purposes. Future development within these designated urban renewal areas must be undertaken in accordance with use limitations specified in approved urban renewal plans.

Chapter 121B places great importance on the achievement of socio-economic development such as the provision of jobs for the unemployed, the addition of tax revenue to overburdened communities and/or the construction of space for the expansion or siting of industry or business. Urban renewal projects help municipalities revitalize deteriorated areas by providing the economic environment needed to attract and support the private investment needed to achieve a balanced mix of housing, business and industry.

RANDOLPH URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In August of 2021, the Town Council approved the RRA's urban renewal plan (hereinafter "Plan") which was prepared by the RRA's property development consultant the BSC Group.

The Plan was initiated by the Town of Randolph through the Town Council and the newly RRA. The Plan process involved collaboration with stakeholders, including area property owners, residents, town officials and a Citizens' Advisory Committee comprised of residents, property owners, and business owners, all of whom who had the mutual interest of revitalizing this once-vibrant mixed-use area by attracting new or expanding existing businesses, encouraging mixed-use residential development, improving circulation for pedestrians, vehicles, and public transit, enhancing visitor experience for business customers, and strengthening the quality of life for residents.

PLAN AREA

The area that is encompassed by the Plan is Crawford Square. Crawford Square is the traditional downtown of the Town of Randolph, comprised principally of the North Main Street commercial corridor and the Crawford Square business district. The particular area designated by the Plan for revitalization consists of approximately 88 parcels with a total land area of approximately 92.8 acres (hereinafter "URA"). This URA contains a variety of commercial, residential, and civic/institutional uses, concentrated in a compact setting that encourages walking. Historic landmarks, such as the First Congregational Church and Stetson Hall are also located in the URA, as well as the Fire Department headquarters and Turner Free Library. Town Hall and Police Department are also located within Crawford Square and adjacent to the URA.

STATEMENT OF NEED

There is a need for this Plan, since the URA is "decadent," meeting the standards of an urban renewal project per state law under M.G.L. c 121B. This is because the Randolph URA has one of more of the decadent conditions of : 1) Building(s) out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, obsolete, or in major need of repair; 2) Inadequate light, air, or open space; 3) Excessive land coverage; and/or 4) Diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise.

These conditions apply to the Crawford Square URA, because the URA is characterized by a variety of commercial and civic/institutional uses in a compact setting with many parcels that are small, irregularly shaped, and have a diversity of ownership. Moreover, many parcels and buildings are underutilized due to excessive parking on the parcel and long-term vacant spaces within buildings. The URA has excessive underutilized land coverage and is predominantly (80.1%) covered by impervious surfaces, i.e., features such as buildings, parking lots and roads. Other conditions harming the URA and impeding private investment include insufficient and

irregular vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation, as well as inadequate signage and wayfinding to draw people into downtown and support commercial uses. This creates a challenging environment for safe and easy circulation to stimulate economic redevelopment. Additionally, there is insufficient open space within the URA to support existing uses and a vibrant commercial and cultural area.

VISION OF THE RRA AND THE PLAN

To transform the Crawford Square Business District into a vibrant commercial and cultural area that is reflective of the diverse population of the town.

GOALS OF THE RRA AND THE PLAN:

The vision is integral to the Plan; it reflects considerations relevant to promoting the business environment, public investment, integrating mixed uses, improving transportation, and enhancing placemaking. Plan implementation is expected to solidify and reenergize Crawford Square's standing as the principal focus for civic, cultural and social functions, incentivize entrepreneurship and small business owners, and support and encourage the existing businesses in the Crawford Square Business District to grow.

To achieve the Vision for Crawford Square, the following goals were established:

- Revitalize Randolph's historic mixed-use town center with the high-quality redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties and construction of new, energy-efficient buildings.
- Encourage mixed-use, higher density development to activate the Crawford Square area with more customers, residents, and increased pedestrian traffic on a daily basis.
- Promote the development of destination retail, office space, and housing in the Crawford Square area.
- Foster shared parking/parking management and organize the public parking supply to be more efficient and reflect current demand.
- Improve vehicular circulation to attract more people and businesses into Crawford Square by providing a safer, more inviting, and easily navigable downtown.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to provide efficient and reliable multi-modal transportation options that are well-connected to other parts of the town and region and reduce travel times during peak hours.
- Expand and enhance open space amenities that contribute to Crawford Square's unique sense of place and vibrant atmosphere, enhance the quality of life for residents, and provide quality experiences for visitors.
- Provide placemaking and wayfinding enhancements to reinforce downtown Randolph as a destination.

OBJECTIVES

To further the Vision for Crawford Square and associated goals, objectives were identified to guide public actions and the selection of specific buildings and properties for redevelopment.

The following objectives underlie the specific public actions that will be undertaken as part of the Plan, such as strategic acquisition, parcel assemblage, disposition, and public realm improvements, in order to address decadent conditions in the URA and promote private investment. These objectives will be accomplished in 3 phases over a 20-year period.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

In order to further the Vision of the Plan, which is to support the Town's strong population diversity, which is one of the most ethnically diverse middle-class populations in the Greater Boston region, the Town of Randolph believes that diversity, equity and inclusion are an economic asset; that diverse perspectives foster innovation necessary to grow a strong economy, create new markets and develop new enterprises.

In order to ensure equity within the public marketplace, connect business opportunities and improve employment for underrepresented populations, the Randolph Redevelopment Authority and/or designated developers will seek partnerships with organizations committed to using best efforts to maintain at least 15% participation of women, people of color, and other diverse groups during design, development and construction as part of this Plan.

RRA PLAN FOR PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN AND PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING

PREPARATION FOR PHASE 1:

As noted above, the Plan will be implemented in 3 phases. In order to prepare for the implantation of this Plan, the RRA is presenting this plan and proposal for the Town to fund the RRA for preparation costs of implementing the Plan.

This plan and proposal specifically request funding for administrative costs in preparing to implement Phase 1 and the RRA's ongoing key responsibilities of land disposition and review and evaluation of developer proposals that will occur throughout the implementation of the Plan.

As for Phase 1 activities, they are: streetscape improvements (bump-outs, ramps, lighting, street trees, sidewalks where needed) and providing bicycle accommodations throughout project area as appropriate to improve safety and facilitate circulation; install/enhancing wayfinding signage for pedestrians, parking, and vehicular circulation; and redevelopment.

DISPOSITION:

The funding of this plan and proposal covers the initial administrative costs for the RRA's key and ongoing responsibility of disposition of the properties under the URA per M.G.L. c. 121B and c. 30B. This responsibility consist of the following activities: 1) overseeing of the sale or lease of real property in accordance with an approved plan; 2) negotiating directly with any business within the URA who wish to relocate onto one of the designated redevelopment parcels, provided they meet the requirements of this Plan; 3) reviewing of developer proposals for alternative building and/or parcel arrangements for the URA, provided they meet the

requirements of this Plan, the goals and objectives of the town/RRA and applicable law; and 4) reviewing of land disposition agreement(s) to be negotiated with the developer; and 5) possibly taking of private property by eminent domain, and the disposition of this property to another private entity for redevelopment.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPERS' PROPOSALS (12.02(10))

Lastly, the funding of this plan and proposal also covers the initial administrative costs for the RRA's other key and ongoing responsibilities of reviewing and evaluating proposals from developers, which will require the RRA to review the proposals for completeness and adherence to submission requirements. The RRA will have to review these particular items: a full description of the proposed development; a detailed description of the nature and location of any public improvements being sought; Financial strength of the developer with financial sources; Proposed job creation and job retention – temporary, permanent and construction jobs; Timetable for design, permitting and construction; Experience and references; and Partners or development team.

After review of the proposals, the RRA will have to evaluate the proposals, considering issues such as (but not limited to) the following: Job creation and retention; Acquisition cost of town or RRA parcels; Commitment to add new commercial, retail, and/or residential uses; Advancement of URP goals and objectives, including (but not limited to) job creation; a clean safe, physical and natural environment; and URP design principles; and Representation that the developer shares the town's vision for the revitalization of the URA.

After evaluations are completed, the RRA will have to identify the preferred developers. The selected developers and the RRA will enter into land disposition agreements, to be approved by the DHCD as required by 760 CMR 12.00. The preferred developers will be required to comply with the goals and objectives of this Plan and current zoning regulations. Any suggested zoning changes or acquisition of Town property will be reviewed with the Town Manager and brought before the Town Council for approval.

FINANCIAL PLAN (12.02 (12))

EXPENDITURES-INITIAL EXPENDITURES:

1. Balance due consultant for redeployment plan changes
2. Various legal services by RRA attorney (30 hrs. @ \$ 250)
3. Grant writer for preparation of various grant applications
4. Clerical services for RRA
5. Various notices to property owners and tenants
6. Specific expenses for the "Sudbury Farm Property" and 35-49 N Main St
 - a. Marketing consultant for RRA
 - b. Preparation of brochures directed to developers
 - c. Mailing and various advertising to potential developers
7. Contingencies

COSTS GUIDELINES: The Randolph Redevelopment Authority will be guided by the town's fiscal policies and guidelines in administering its funds.

FUNDING REQUEST: The Randolph Redevelopment Authority's request for funds from the Randolph Town council is \$50,000.00.

FIGURE 1

Randolph Redevelopment Authority	
BUDGET BREAKDOWN	
Expenditure	Amount
Balance due consultant for redeployment plan changes	\$ 11,000
Various legal services by RRA attorney (30 hrs. @ \$ 250)	\$ 7,500
Grant writer for preparation of various grant applications	\$ 5,000
Clerical services for RRA	\$ 1,500
Various notices to property owners and tenants	\$ 1,000
Specific expenses for the "Sudbury Farm Property" and 35-49 N Main St	
Marketing consultant for RRA	\$ 10,000
Preparation of brochures directed to developers	\$ 3,500
Mailing and various advertising to potential developers	\$ 6,500
Contingencies	<u>\$ 4,000</u>
	\$ 50,000