



# TOWN of BROOKLINE

## *Massachusetts*

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MELVIN A. KLECKNER  
Town Administrator

March 6, 2018

### Kent/Station Street Town-owned Parking Lot Request for Information

Dear Developer:

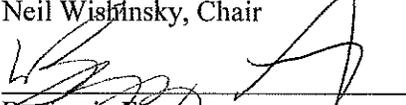
The Select Board of the Town of Brookline is writing to elicit feedback from the development community regarding a potential development opportunity in the Town of Brookline.

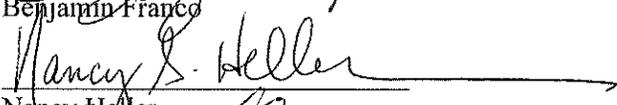
The Town is evaluating the redevelopment potential of a small Town-owned parking lot in the heart of Brookline Village. The site currently includes approximately forty public parking spaces located across Station Street from the Brookline Village T-stop on the MBTA green line. The Town is specifically interested in exploring opportunities to redeveloping the site as affordable senior housing as well as replacing the existing parking spaces which are utilized primarily by area merchants during the daytime and by residents overnight. A Request for Information (RFI) is enclosed. Your response to this request will help us further our understanding of the redevelopment challenges and opportunities at this location. Additionally, your response will help define criteria for a potential RFP to solicit proposals to create affordable residential development targeted towards seniors and constructing a building consistent with the character of this historic neighborhood.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
Neil Wishinsky, Chair

  
Benjamin Franco

  
Nancy Heller

  
Bernard Greene

  
Heather Hamilton

**Potential Redevelopment of the  
Kent/Station Street Municipal Parking Lot**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

April 3, 2018



Town of Brookline  
Department of Planning and Community Development  
333 Washington Street – 3rd Floor  
Brookline, MA 02445

**Potential Redevelopment of the  
Kent/Station Street Municipal Parking Lot**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

The Town of Brookline is evaluating the development potential of a small Town-owned parking lot in the heart of the Brookline Village neighborhood. The site is 14,466 square feet with approximately 40 public parking spaces that are utilized primarily by area merchants during the daytime and by residents overnight. This Request for Information (RFI) is being issued to obtain feedback from the development community regarding the opportunities and challenges associated with the building program under discussion. The Town will use RFI responses to help determine if development of the site should be further pursued and to help inform a formal RFP that will best respond to the needs of Brookline and the neighborhood, while attracting the most qualified bidders. Respondents to this RFI may be invited to submit a response to an RFP should the Town decide to pursue a development on this site.

Please note that this RFI is issued solely for the purpose of obtaining information. Nothing in this RFI shall be interpreted as a commitment on the part of the Town of Brookline to enter into a contract with any respondent or to make any procurement.

**Costs:**

By submitting a response, respondents agree that any cost incurred in responding to this RFI, or in support of activities associated with this RFI, shall be the sole responsibility of respondent. The Town of Brookline Planning and Community Development Department shall not be held responsible for any costs incurred by respondents in preparing their respective responses to this RFI.

**Review Rights:**

Responses to this RFI may be reviewed and evaluated by any person(s) at the discretion of the Planning Department of the Town of Brookline, including independent consultants retained by the Planning Department of the Town of Brookline now or in the future.

**Public Record:**

All responses to this RFI will be public record under the State Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. L. ch. 66 s. 10, regardless of confidentiality notices set forth on such writings to the contrary.

This RFI is divided into two parts. Part I provides background regarding the community, neighborhood and site context. Part II outlines the Town's proposed goals and preliminary design guidelines.

Interested parties are requested to respond by 2:30 PM on **Thursday, April 26, 2018** to:

Town of Brookline  
Purchasing Division  
333 Washington St.  
2nd Floor, Room 212  
Brookline, MA 02445

Your response should be in letter form and address the following questions:

1. Does your firm have experience with development similar to the one being explored?
2. Would your firm have an interest in submitting a proposal for this project, as presently conceived?
3. Are there any modifications to the development program or criteria that you would recommend to assure a strong project?
4. Several conceptual alternatives for a development including a mix of predominantly affordable senior housing with some market rate units and retail space are being evaluated by the Town. The Town has not determined yet if it would sell the land or pursue a long-term ground lease to a selected developer. As part of your response, please comment on these alternatives, taking into consideration the value of the property; the Town's interest in maximizing affordable senior housing opportunities; the desire to replace the existing parking on site; and the desire for the envisioned development to be complementary to the existing streetscape and building massing.
5. Based on your responses to the above, do you believe that residential development on this site that consists primarily of affordable units for low-and moderate-income seniors would be financially feasible? If so, do you have any first impressions regarding how many such units might be needed to achieve feasibility?
6. Please feel free to provide additional comments or suggestions.

Please direct any questions to:

Joseph Viola, Assistant Director for Community Planning  
Phone: 617-730-2125  
Email: [Brookline Planning](#)

Your questions will be shared with the Town's Study Committee that was appointed by the Select Board to examine the site's redevelopment potential. The Town may invite one or more respondents to meet with Town officials to clarify responses.

## PART I

### Kent/Station Street Town-owned Parking Lot

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### A. History of Project and Community Process to Date

In the fall of 2016, a citizen-petitioned warrant article asking Town Meeting to adopt a Resolution requesting that the Town study the Kent/Station Street municipal parking lot for the purpose of redeveloping the site as affordable senior housing was adopted. Following passage of the resolution, the Select Board appointed the “Kent/Station Street Affordable Senior Housing Committee” to explore a proposal for redeveloping the site as senior affordable housing while retaining the existing number of public parking spaces and to determine if such a project is viable. The Committee has met several times over the past year to review available information and data relevant to the potential for development of the site including site history and zoning limitations and to establish goals for a development on the site. Additional background documents can be found at:

<http://www.brooklinema.gov/1376/KentStation-St-Affordable-Senior-Housing>

The Committee has reached a point in its process where more information is needed to inform its recommendations to the Select Board on how best to proceed with facilitating a redevelopment on the site that is financially feasible and meets the Town’s goals. The Committee is interested in additional feedback from the broader development community and potential creative solutions to promote the redevelopment of the site as affordable senior housing that is complementary to the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood. The recommendations that result from the Committee process will inform the Town’s decision to pursue a development on the site as well as determine criteria that may be included in a future Request for Proposals that would be issued by the Town.

##### B. The Development Context

###### 1. The Town of Brookline, Population and Affordable Senior Housing Goals

Bordered on three sides by the City of Boston, its cosmopolitan quality is balanced by the convenience of a small town. Brookline is well known for its excellent public services and is considered a very desirable place to live for a wide range of people. With a population of approximately 60,000, Brookline is predominantly a residential community. According to population and household projections provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, by 2030 Brookline’s population could reach 65,951, with significant growth in two age groups: children under 18 and seniors 75 years and older. With respect to seniors 75 and older, this sub-population is expected to increase by 60%.

Brookline has a diverse housing stock with a significant number of multi-family rental and ownership units. While the Town contains over 2,000 affordable units, turnover is rare and housing opportunities are extremely limited for low- and moderate- income residents. There is strong demand for both market rate and affordable units (ownership and rental) across all age and income categories. Like much of Metro Boston, private housing production in Brookline over the past several years has primarily come in the form of higher end units at prices that far exceed the reach of most people.

As demand for housing continues to outpace supply, prices continue to increase, widening the affordability gap for those that wish to move to or remain in Brookline. According to the Town's most recent Housing Production Plan, Brookline's median single family sale price in 2015 was \$1,587,500, and the median condominium sale price was \$660,000. These numbers have only continued to increase over the past several years. Brookline rents are also very high and demand for affordable rental options greatly exceeds supply. Average rents for a two-bedroom unit in Brookline currently range from \$2,800 to \$3100+ and one-bedroom units average \$2,100 to \$2,500+ per month.

The Town also recently completed a Housing Production Plan (HPP) that was approved and then certified by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development in November of 2016. During the HPP process, an online needs assessment survey was conducted asking residents to respond to a number of questions related to housing in town. About 70% of the residents who responded to the survey said it is important for them to stay in Brookline as they age. However, many cited the need for more availability of condominiums and apartments in walkable neighborhoods and pedestrian improvements to help them stay in the community. Additionally, one out of every four residents who responded said it is likely that they will move out of Brookline in the next five years, and most of them cited high housing/living costs as the primary reason. There is a strong desire for Brookline seniors to have the necessary infrastructure, including affordable housing options to enable them to age in place and the Town remains committed to supporting projects that further that goal.

The Town of Brookline is committed to expanding its supply of permanently affordable housing serving a range of households with eligible incomes. The Town works with non- and for-profit developers to redevelop existing rental properties and to undertake new development.

## 2. The Brookline Village Neighborhood

The Brookline Village neighborhood is located approximately 3 miles from downtown Boston and five miles from Route 95/128, both of which are easily accessed from both Beacon Street and Route 9. It is minutes away from a regional shopping destination in Chestnut Hill and within walking distance to local shopping and dining areas in Coolidge Corner and Washington Square. The neighborhood is well-served by the MBTA green line and bus service and is in close proximity to the Emerald Necklace. With its walkability and tree-lined streets, Brookline Village

is one of the Town's original centers of activity, a legacy that continues today with a mix of single and multi-family residential neighborhoods insulated by primarily commercial buildings along two of the Town's major thoroughfares. The ground floors of many of the commercial buildings in the neighborhood are occupied by local retail shops, restaurants and services, with a mix of office space and residential units above. The Town Hall, Health and Public Safety offices and main library are also located within a short walk.

### 3. The Kent/Station Street Municipal Parking Lot Site

The site is located in the heart of Brookline Village, a short walk from Harvard Street and across the street from the Brookline Village T-stop on the MBTA's Green Line. The site is also adjacent to the Brookline Village State and National Register Historic Districts and is proximate to State and National Register Historic sites. The site is a 14,466 square foot parcel currently utilized as a public parking lot. It has frontage on both Kent Street and Station Street and slopes gently down toward Station Street. The lot is heavily utilized by area merchants during the daytime and by residents overnight. It is also located across the street from a slightly larger municipal parking lot. The site is zoned as General Business with a maximum floor area ratio of 2.0. The zoning allows for both commercial and residential uses. Existing use, dimensional, inclusionary zoning and parking requirements may be seen by accessing the Town's Zoning By-law here:

<http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13682>

While small, the site represents a unique infill development opportunity with excellent access to public transit and neighborhood amenities. It is anticipated that development of the site would necessitate zoning relief or the creation of a special zoning district should the Town decide to move forward with a redevelopment proposal.

## PART II

### Kent/Station Street Town-Owned Parking Lot

#### DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND GUIDELINES

##### A. Development Goals

The Town of Brookline is exploring opportunities to attract a developer to build high quality, affordable senior housing on a unique 14,466 square foot site located in Brookline Village. The Town welcomes proposals that maximize the number of affordable units on the site while replacing the existing off street public parking either on site or in the immediate vicinity. We expect that interested developers will have significant experience in public engagement and a track record of leveraging public funds from federal, state and local sources to support this project. In addition, the Town is interested in attracting a developer with experience in successfully owning and managing affordable senior housing developments.

**Development of the Kent/Station Street Town-owned Parking Lot is expected to meet the following Town goals:**

1. Develop attractive, contextual senior housing that maximizes the number of affordable units.
2. Replace the existing parking either on site or at a nearby location.

##### B. Design Guidelines

- a. Onsite parking access should be from both Kent Street and Station Street to minimize the width of curb cuts and traffic impacts.
- b. The design and construction of a building on this site should be consistent with the neighborhood context (including the choice of materials) and should be of high quality, reflective of the varied architecture, and character of the neighborhood.
- c. All building sides facing a public way should be designed with equal quality and care.
- d. A public passageway connecting Kent Street to Station Street should be retained through the site.
- e. Parking should be provided on-site for residents, staff and visitors, as needed; this parking is not including the existing public parking spaces.

- f. Building mass should be articulated in a manner that creates visual interest and minimizes impacts on surrounding properties.

**C. Affordability Guidelines**

- 1. The Town assumes that cross subsidy from market rate rents or market rate sales could potentially supplement public subsidies identified and secured by the developer, and that the project will underwrite affordable housing available to a range of incomes.
- 2. Affordable units should be targeted to households with incomes that enable the developer to maximize the number of affordable units.
- 3. Below are the minimum standards for affordable units in Brookline. There may be some flexibility to allow for more creative building program options. Ideally, affordable units should be provided in a range of unit sizes, with senior-oriented units that are compatible with the neighborhood. No unit should be smaller than 500 square feet.

1 bedroom:	700 square feet
2 bedrooms:	900 square feet