



MASSDEVELOPMENT



September 20, 2012

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Mayor Alex Morse
City of Holyoke
536 Dwight St.
Holyoke, MA 01040

Rosalie Deane
Executive Director
Holyoke Housing Authority
475 Maple Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Dear Mayor Morse and Director Deane:

Pursuant to our recent discussions and your request to help the City and the Housing Authority explore options for the transformation of the Lyman Terrace/High Street corridor, MassDevelopment and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) are pleased to offer our assistance. We propose to fund and undertake a study that examines the opportunities for housing preservation and redevelopment; improves housing options for Lyman Terrace residents and other Holyoke residents with a range of incomes; increases job opportunities by strengthening the High Street retail corridor and examines other economic development potential; and identifies public realm improvements that can increase residents' safety and enjoyment of the neighborhood and create better connections to transit, open space and other amenities of Downtown Holyoke.

The study would focus on redevelopment options for a mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood in the area bounded by Lyman Street, the First Canal, Dwight Street and High Street. Our analysis will examine the physical and financial feasibility of rehabilitating existing Lyman Terrace housing, rehabilitating upper-floor uses in the buildings fronting High Street, reuse of vacant buildings in the area, and/or demolition and the potential for new construction. We will also examine the feasibility of off-site housing development nearby that might accommodate some existing Lyman Terrace residents.

The study would build upon and deepen recent planning work including the Center City Vision Plan from 2009 and the new Plan for the Revitalization of Center City Holyoke recently completed by the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority. The information gathered by these studies, by other community planning efforts concerning Lyman Terrace, and by interviews with businesses and building owners will inform our work to create two to three alternate concepts for building and site reuse consistent with but more detailed than those plans. We anticipate reviewing

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Rosalie Deane, Director

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these concepts with local residents and the general public at a meeting to be held on or near the site.

Building upon public comments and further technical and financial analysis, we will develop a preferred approach consistent with community goals and realistically informed by market conditions. The final study would be presented at a second public meeting and made available for posting on the City's web site.

The final study would also make recommendations as to how the City and State could influence the implementation of the plan through some combination of public infrastructure investment, application of development financing, provision of parking spaces, and other means to attract private sector investment. The report would include a phasing plan for priority short term and longer term actions.

Rhonda Spector of MassDevelopment will be the project manager and she will work with Rita Farrell of MHP to coordinate the plan. Our consulting team includes Utile Inc., a planning and architecture firm with extensive urban experience including in New Bedford and Springfield, and Charleen Regan a housing consultant with development and financing expertise in both state and federal housing programs.

Prior to finalizing our Memorandum of Agreement, our team would like to meet with both of you to review the attached workplan tasks and schedule and to also reach an agreement on a set of principles that will guide our planning. We will be in touch shortly to arrange for this meeting in Holyoke.

We very much look forward to working with you on this important project. Please feel free to call either of us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Marty Jones
CEO, MassDevelopment


Clark Ziegler,
Executive Director
Massachusetts Housing Partnership



SUMMARY OF WORKPLAN TASKS

- Review existing plans and studies completed for the area by HHA, HRA and City of Holyoke – Led by MDFA
- Compile property inventory including building type, use, occupancy, building ownership – Led by MDFA
- Interview building owners to gather information on current uses and renovation plans, if any – Led by MDFA
- Undertake a public process to elicit stakeholder input including Lyman Terrace residents – Collaborative effort by City, HHA, MDFA and MHP
- Review existing housing market data for downtown including rent levels, amenities available – Led by MHP
- Identify existing or new local housing opportunities in the downtown Holyoke area for some of the current tenants of Lyman Terrace – Led by MHP
- Evaluate current apartment unit sizes & layouts at Lyman Terrace & potential for enlargement/reconfiguration of units to bring into conformance with current multi-family housing construction standards – Led by MDFA
- Gather information on public garage usage and demand and evaluate current financing structure to identify any constraints which might affect availability of garage as parking resource for new development in the area – Led by MDFA
- Prepare two to three concept site plans for the area – Led by MDFA
- Make recommendations on essential elements for a successful redevelopment, identify priority action items, and outline phasing strategy for redevelopment effort – Led by MDFA
- Identify potential financial resources and prepare feasibility analysis for mixed income reuse at Lyman Terrace – Led by MHP
- Identify potential financial resources for public infrastructure improvements – Led by MDFA