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Historic Boston and The American City Coalition named to redevelop Upham's Corner Comfort Station

June 18, 2015 - Construction Design & Engineering

The City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development has designated the redevelopment of the historic Upham's Corner Comfort to the partnership of Historic Boston Inc. and The American City Coalition (TACC).

Historic Boston Inc. and TACC are working with Noah Hicks, founder of Dorchester's Bowdoin Bike School, to repurpose the existing Comfort Station into The Bike Kitchen, a full-service bicycle shop and café, creating a sustainable future for this neglected and important historic structure.

"The Comfort Station is an important part of Upham's Corner's history," said Boston mayor Martin Walsh. "We are thrilled to see it returned to use, and look forward to the continued revitalization of this important neighborhood."

The joint proposal for the Comfort Station reflects the objectives of both nonprofit organizations to strengthen the Upham's Corner business district through their combined expertise in real estate development, historic preservation, and economic development.

"HBI is proud to be designated to restore the Upham's Corner Comfort Station," said Kathy Kottaridis, executive director of Historic Boston Inc. "Our project brings back an important but at-risk building and demonstrates that HBI's model of preservation-based development can create economic opportunity for entrepreneurs like Noah Hicks."

"We are indebted to The American City Coalition for the invaluable technical assistance it brought to our partnership," said Kottaridis. "TACC's ability to match the community's priorities with delivery of high quality professional services accelerated project planning and gave our collaboration a winning proposal."

"This project continues the positive economic development in Upham's Corner," said Neil McCullagh, executive director of The American City Coalition. "TACC is thrilled to support this early, close partnership between developer and tenant because we know the renovation and use of this building will have a catalytic impact on this neighborhood."

The proposal, chosen from among four contenders by the Department for Neighborhood Development, would:

Restore the 1922 Comfort Station, empty since 1977, not only preserving it but also maintaining its connection with the history of public transportation at this Dorchester crossroad.

Reactivate the building with a new business, the Bike Kitchen, a bike repair shop and café, which will fill a need in the neighborhood and generate new jobs and training opportunities.

Broaden the impact in the neighborhood by bringing commerce and physical improvements to the southeastern edge of Columbia Road, also demonstrating the potential for similar improvements and investments along the street.

Interpret the adjacent burying ground for visitors and make this 17th century space more publicly

accessible.

Exemplify solid nonprofit collaboration through a three-way partnership of HBI, TACC, and a local entrepreneur, made possible by the City and supporting an economically sustainable solution including preservation and economic development.

Historic Boston Inc. will be the real estate developer and long-term owner of the property. HBI will structure the project's financing and oversee all phases of design, engineering and construction. The project is expected to require use of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which HBI will seek from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The American City Coalition is a minority partner whose technical assistance to the project includes: Ongoing business support services to the prospective tenant for the redeveloped Comfort Station. Financial support for pre-development costs including architectural and planning project support that includes site design, structural assessment, and cost estimation.

Coordinating community outreach and presentation of the project to the Upham's Corner community.

Providing ongoing support for pre-development and fundraising for the capital and operational costs.

Entrepreneur Noah Hicks, owner of Bowdoin Street Bikes, will be the tenant and will operate it as a combination full-service bike shop and caf  . The architect for the development is Utile, Inc. Architecture + Planning.

HBI has recently completed rehabilitation projects in other Boston neighborhoods. This month, Hyde Park's 1868 Vertullo Building re-opened with five new retail spaces and four residential units. The organization also completed the Alvah Kittredge House in Roxbury, an 1836 Greek Revival structure that was restored for use as five apartments, and the 1875 Hayden Building in Chinatown for four apartments and a retail space.

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