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Urban Land Institute to advise City of Boston on real estate development opportunities related to rail line linking North Station and South Station

September 29, 2017 - Front Section

Boston, MA A group of nationally renowned land use and urban planning experts has been convened by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to make recommendations to the City of Boston on the opportunities for downtown development that could result from an underground rail line linking North Station and South Station in the city. The panel, composed of land use professionals representing all aspects of urban design and urban development, is being sponsored by the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership in collaboration with the City of Boston and several communities in the greater Boston region.

The panelists, convened through ULI's Advisory Services program, will be visiting Boston Oct. 1-5 to analyze local market conditions and provide recommendations for the potential of real estate development on several sites, including the U.S Postal Services Fort Point Station, Widett Circle and a possible new Central Station site. Additionally, the panel will examine the potential impacts of creating a unified regional rail service that would serve greater Boston. In drafting its recommendations, the panel will be considering such factors as optimal uses for the sites, the connection to adjacent neighborhoods, and alignment with the city's goals and vision for future growth.

During the Oct. 1-5 week, the panelists will tour the study area and spend two days meeting and interviewing stakeholders from the public and private sector. After carefully analyzing the sites and completing the interviews, the panelists will then frame their recommendations and draft a presentation that will be made to the public at the conclusion of the visit.

ULI leader Marilee Utter, president of Citiventure Associates in Denver, is the chairman of the advisory panel that will be visiting Boston. "We're excited to bring ULI's expertise to Boston," said Utter, who is a highly regarded urban development and transit expert. "We'll be exploring the potential real estate effect of an underground transit connection between these two major stations and other regional transportation projects to determine how they might contribute to the Boston region's overall appeal and competitiveness."

Utter will be joined by panelists Rick Krochalis, commissioner, Seattle Design Commission, Seattle; Robert Ravelli, director, Contemporary Solutions, London; Michael Reynolds, principal, The Concord

Group, Newport Beach, California; Stan Wall, partner, HR&A Advisors, Washington, D.C.; Theresa Ward, deputy county executive/commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning, Hauppauge, New York; Mary Campbell, associate vice chancellor for real estate, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri; and Stephen Whitehouse, partner at Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects and Planners, New York City.

Now in its 70th year, the ULI advisory services program assembles experts in the fields of real estate and land use planning to participate on panels worldwide, offering recommendations for complex planning and development projects, programs and policies. Panels have developed more than 700 studies for a broad range of land uses, ranging from waterfront properties to inner-city retail.

According to Thomas Eitler, senior vice president of ULI's advisory services program, the strength of the program lies in ULI's unique ability to draw on the substantial knowledge of its 40,000-plus members, including land developers, engineers, public officials, academics, lenders, architects, planners and urban designers. "The independent views of the panelists bring a fresh perspective to the land use challenge," Eitler said. "The advisory services program is about offering creative, innovative approaches to community building."

Past sponsors of ULI advisory service panels include: federal, state and local government agencies; regional councils of government; chambers of commerce; redevelopment authorities; private developers and property owners; community development corporations; lenders; historic preservation groups; non-profit community groups; environmental organizations and economic development agencies.

The public is invited to attend a reception on Monday, October 2, from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Boston Plaza Hotel at 50 Park Plaza in Boston. The panel's recommendations will be presented at the Boston Plaza Hotel on Friday, October 5, at 9 a.m. The presentation is open to the public.

The Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the institute has nearly 40,000 members worldwide representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. For more information, please visit uli.org or follow us on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

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