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JAMAICA PLAIN

## City has no plans to study, rezone South Huntington Ave. section poised for development

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 3, 2012 02:46 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Despite suggestions by some residents, the Boston Redevelopment Authority does not intend to conduct a planning study or rezone a section of South Huntington Avenue in Jamaica Plain where two major housing developments have been proposed, a spokeswoman for the city agency said.

Instead, the authority, which oversees all sizeable development in the city, plans to rely on its customary project-specific approval process to evaluate the two proposals, said BRA spokeswoman Melina Schuler.

Some in the neighborhood have suggested that city redevelopment officials launch a planning study and consider rezoning after the proposals were recently submitted.

Each project would build about 200 housing units. They would replace an old, institutional building and a vacant, wooded lot on properties separated by about 200 feet. The parcels are surrounded by other South Huntington Avenue

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300 feet. The parcels are surrounded by other South Huntington Avenue properties that have seen ownership changes, new development, and closures in recent years and months.

Schuler said the authority still could explore a planning study, rezoning, or both if the community formally requests those options through written correspondence.

Planning studies typically take at least one year to complete. They can then be followed by a rezoning process, which usually takes another year or more.

The strip of South Huntington Avenue is part of a broad section of Jamaica Plain that was last rezoned nearly two decades ago. The city formally adopted the current zoning on Sept. 7, 1993.

### Development along South Huntington Avenue

Residents have expressed concern about the number of developments that have been proposed, are under construction, or have been recently completed along a short stretch of South Huntington.

At 161 South Huntington, a developer [is proposing](#) to demolish a 98-year-old special education school building to construct a residential building with about 196 units and around 156 parking spaces. The Home for Little Wanderers, which currently operates its well-known [Knights Children Center](#) on that a 3.5-acre property, has said that this coming fall the agency [plans to relocate](#) some programming and services from the center to a larger campus it owns in Walpole.

At 105A South Huntington, another developer [is proposing](#) to clear a 1.1-acre wooded lot to construct a 195-unit residential building that would stand about 12 stories tall in front and between four and five stories tall in the back. The 202,450-square foot structure would include some ground-floor retail and 176 garaged parking spaces.

At 201 South Huntington sits an 85-year-old building that houses the Goddard House Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. That nonprofit's board [announced](#) in July month that it [plans to close](#) the facility in early September. The board has said it has not yet considered what it may do with the two-acre property that the city has assessed as being worth \$6.1 million.

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At 150 South Huntington, the opposite side of the busy roadway, the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus recently [began building](#) a five-story, 500-space parking garage. The 129,600 square-foot structure is expected to be completed next spring or summer.

At 81 South Huntington, a 39-room boutique hotel opened this summer. Construction of that building began about two years ago at the site of the former Pond View Nursing Home, which closed in 2008, according to the [Jamaica Plain Gazette](#).

At 125 South Huntington is the 47,000 square-foot AstraZeneca Hope Lodge Center, which [opened](#) in fall 2008. The facility offers free temporary homes in 40 suites to cancer patients and their families. It is directly south of the [North American Indian Center of Boston](#), which is abutted to the north by 105A S. Huntington Ave. where housing is being proposed.

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