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JAMAICA PLAIN, ROXBURY

City eyes feedback for study on development along South Huntington

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Posted by Matt Rocheleau, December 4, 2014 2:04 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

City officials plan to meet this month to launch a study about development along South Huntington Avenue in Jamaica Plain, an area that has drawn concern from some residents due to recent changes and the potential for more

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The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hennigan School cafeteria on Heath Street, according to the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

The meeting will be a “listening session” for staff from the authority to hear community feedback and concerns about current conditions and potential development-related changes in the future, officials said.

Some residents have said they are wary of significant development proposed, underway and recently completed within a quarter-mile stretch of S. Huntington near where Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill meet.

Officials at the authority have said they do not want the study to stop or delay development proposals.

The authority will use the study to determine whether any further action – including creating a master plan or making zoning changes – will be needed for the area, Shen has said.

“If there are things in this study the community and we need to codify, we’ll figure out then what method and tool we can use to do that,” he said.

The study will focus on development issues including: housing mix and affordability, transportation, parking, historic preservation, open space, access to green space, and the height, density, setbacks and use of buildings, according to Shen.

It will cover a three-quarter mile stretch of South Huntington, from its intersection with Huntington Avenue to where it meets Perkins Street.

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.

Last month, the city gave final approval for a project at 161 South Huntington 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 operated its well-known [Knight Children's Center](#) on that a 3.5-acre property, recently [relocated](#) some programming and services from the center to a larger campus it owns in Walpole.

City regulators are reviewing another housing proposal nearby at [105A S. Huntington](#), that would clear a 1.1-acre wooded lot for a 12-story, 195-unit building, with a parking garage and retail.

At 201 South Huntington, next door to the former Little Wanderers site, sits an 85-year-old building that housed the [Goddard House](#) nursing home until early September when it [abruptly closed](#). Goddard's nonprofit board has not announced plans for the two-acre property. Some expect it will soon be proposed for redevelopment.

A 39-room boutique hotel opened this summer at 81 S. Huntington, replacing a former nursing home next door to the wooded lot at 105A S. Huntington.

Across the street at 150 S. Huntington, a five-story, 500-space parking garage is under [construction](#) on the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus.

At 81 South Huntington, a 39-room boutique hotel opened in the summer. Construction of that building began about two years before 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.

And, about a half-mile away, the redevelopment of the former Blessed Sacrament church campus on Centre Street [has drawn criticism recently](#) because revised proposals would build a higher mix of market-rate housing than originally planned for the site.

Residents of Jamaica Plain have clashed in recent years over concerns about gentrification in the neighborhood.

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