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Mayor

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James Freas
Acting Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 10, 2015
TO: Real Property Reuse Committee of the Board of Aldermen
FROM: James Freas, Acting Director of Planning and Development
Alexandra Ananth, Chief Planner for Current Planning
SUBJECT: Reuse of 70 Crescent Street
MEETING DATE: July 13, 2015
CC: Dori Zaleznik, Chief Administrative Officer

In response to questions raised at previous Real Property Reuse Committee meetings the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming working session.

PETITION #384-11(4)

70 Crescent Street

At the last Real Property Reuse Committee meeting on June 26, 2015, it was decided that although the City would look to retain control of the land and act as the developer for a residential project with no more than eight units, the Planning Department should revise the Draft RFI for the Committee's review on July 13, 2015. Attached is a revised Draft RFI.

It is expected that Alice Ingerson will be available at the meeting to answer any questions regarding potential CPC funding for this project.

Attachment: Draft RFI

DRAFT Request for Interest

70 Crescent St

Newton, MA

July 13, 2015



Request for Interest Summary

- The City of Newton, through the Real Property Reuse Committee of the Board of Aldermen, is seeking Requests for Interest for the reuse of 70 Crescent Street, the former headquarters of the Newton Parks and Rec. Department.
- The Committee will entertain proposals for long-term lease or sale of a portion of the site contingent upon the parameters of this RFI.
- The site is conveniently located between the villages of Auburndale and West Newton, with proximate access to the commuter rail. The site is also accessible via I-95/Route 128, Route 9 and I-90/Mass Pike.

Vision

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The objectives of this RFI are:

- **Housing Opportunities:**
To advance affordable housing opportunities to a variety of income earners
- **Right-Sized housing and Open Space:**
To develop a context sensitive site plan that includes modest or “right-sized” residential units while at the same time maximizing open space for residents and the neighborhood
- **Connectivity:**
To improve neighborhood access to the Rev. Ford Playground
- **Future Prototypes:**
The RFI will have a preference for project teams that can construct net zero or energy positive residential building prototypes that can serve as models for future practice

Property Description

- The site consists of a 98,088 square foot lot. However, only the portion of the site occupied by the former Parks and Recreation Department is part of the RFI; **the portion of the site that is improved as the Rev. Ford Playground is not part of the RFI.** The area available for reuse is generally divided from the Playground by a chain link fence and is approximately 60,000 SF.
- The site is located in a residential area with single, two-family and attached dwellings. Other adjacent uses include the Massachusetts Turnpike to the north, the Rev. Ford Playground and an Eversource electric sub-station to the south, and Myrtle Baptist church to the east.
- The site fronts on Crescent and Robinhood Streets and slopes down to the northeast. The site is improved with paving, a 2.5-story brick structure, a large garage, and debris piles.



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History of the Site

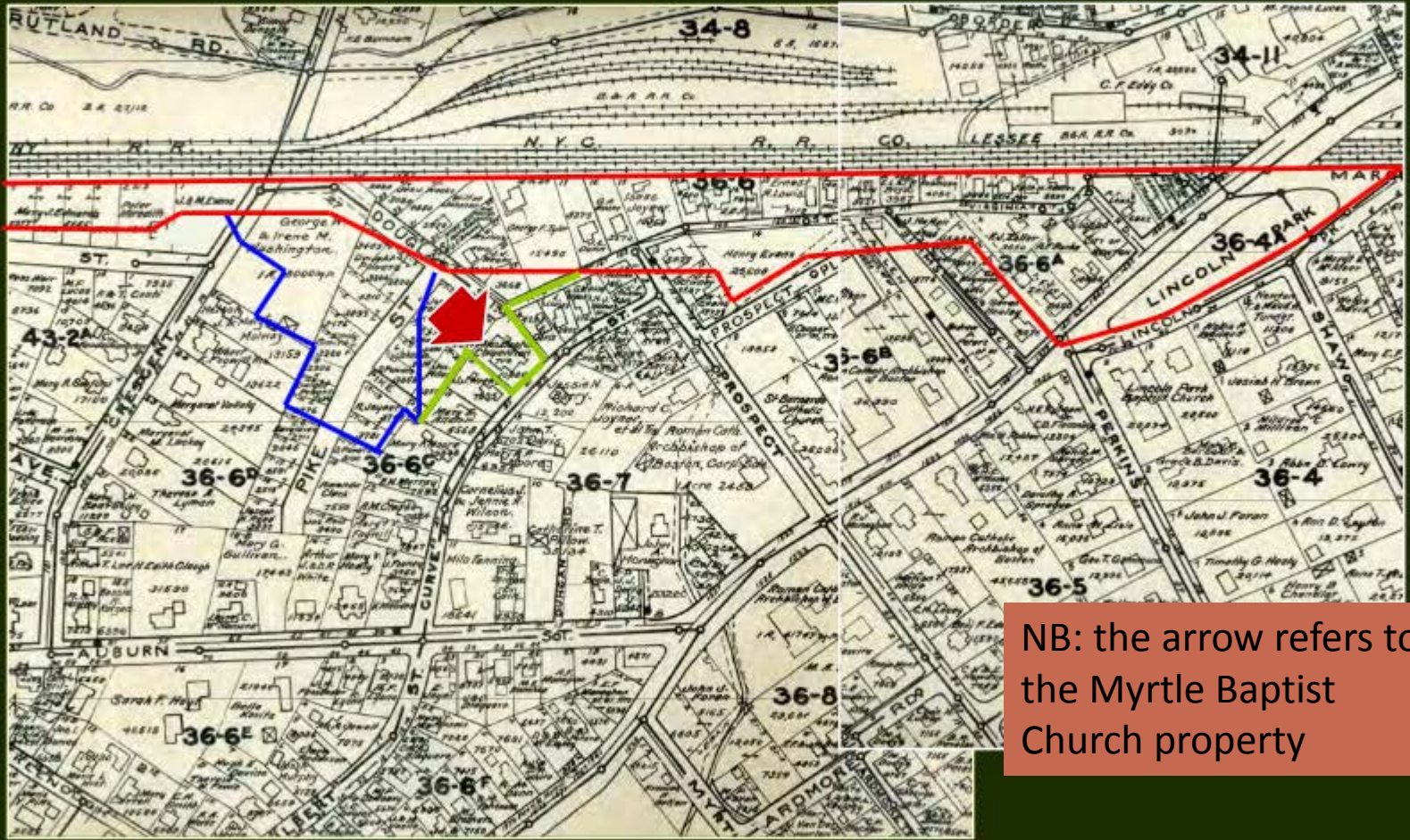
- The site was previously used for housing and early records of the site show portions of two streets, and multiple residential buildings. It is believed that later uses include a construction company. The site was taken by the Turnpike Authority and then transferred to the City of Newton and used by the Parks and Recreation Department.

*land now
owned by:*

*Massachusetts
Turnpike Authority*

*City of Newton
Recreation Dept.*

*Myrtle Baptist
Church*



NB: the arrow refers to the Myrtle Baptist Church property

streets and houses that no longer exist

Historical Context

- The Myrtle Baptist Neighborhood is the surviving half of the City's only historically African-American district, which was built for African-American residents after the 1874 founding of Myrtle Baptist Church, a few streets behind the main thoroughfares of Auburn and Washington Streets, south of the former Boston & Albany Railroad tracks. In 1963, approximately half of the original neighborhood was destroyed by the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike extension parallel to the Railroad.

City of Newton, MA

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Scale 1" = 134.29 ft

[Print Property Record Card](#) | [View Sketch](#)

Property SBL 33006 0061
Address 70 CRESCENT ST
Owner CITY OF NEWTON
RECREATION DEPT

Basic Information

Property SBL 33006 0061
Address 70 CRESCENT ST
Tax Bill Number 2504707
Land Use * 931
Land Use Description * MUNICIPAL IMPROVED
Lot Size 98,088 sq ft
Frontage 55 ft
Zoning ** PUB
Map ID 040SW
FY 2015 \$2,086,800

* The land use and description listed here are for Assessing Department purposes based on historical records in the Assessing Department. For an official ruling on the legal use of the property pursuant to the state building code and/or Newton Zoning Ordinances, contact the Inspectional Services Department.

** For reference purposes only. Please check with Engineering Department for official zoning designation.

Ownership

Current Owners CITY OF NEWTON
RECREATION DEPT
Mailing Address 1000 COMM AVE
NEWTON, MA 02459

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RFI Parameters

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- The City seeks to redevelop the project from its current use to residential use for up to eight (8) units of housing. Our interest is a compact footprint with modest sized units so that the playground/open space can be expanded to the maximum extent possible.
- Proposals should include a mix of unit sizes and should provide either private or shared outdoor space.
- Projects must be compliant with the City's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (Section 30-24(f) of the City's Revised Zoning Ordinances), however, the maximum number of permanently affordable units should be considered. Affordable units should be eligible for inclusion on the SHI.
- All units must be adaptable for persons with mobility or other handicaps.
- The City is expected to assume (share?) liability for any required environmental cleanup of the site pursuant to MGL Chapter 21E.

Additional Parameters

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- Improved access to the Playground as well as additional open space that can be incorporated into the Playground area will enhance the attractiveness of your proposal. The lease or sale of the developable portions of this site may be used by the City to fund improvements to the Playground or to leverage the acquisition of additional open space.
- Consideration should be given to the reuse of the existing brick building located on the site.
- Consideration should be given to improve parking and access for the Myrtle Baptist Church.
- Although the City believes that 8 units is the appropriate number for the site, additional units may be considered if these units will be affordable, restricted to seniors, or if co-housing is proposed.
- A variety of funding sources could be considered including but not limited to Community Preservation Act funding, HOME funds and CDBG funding.

Additional Parameters Cont.

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- The City seeks to advance industry practice and public awareness of energy efficient green building design and construction practices, and to construct high performance residential green building prototypes that are sustainable over the life-cycle of the units. To that extent, the RFI will also give a preference for project teams that can construct net zero or energy positive residential building prototypes that can serve as models for future practice.

Urban and Architectural Design

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- The overriding urban design guideline for this parcel is to ensure that the general scale and unique local characteristics of the surrounding historical neighborhood are reflected in the proposed design. Proposed designs may be traditional or contemporary in character and detail and must be complimentary to the scale, typology and architectural style of the neighborhood.
- The expansion of the playground, maximizing open space and a compact footprint are of paramount importance to the immediate neighborhood and City.

Anticipated Process

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- If the property is approved for redevelopment the Mayor will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP), and a potential owner/lessee may be selected.
- It is anticipated any proposed development will need a special permit from the Board of Aldermen for limited zoning relief and will be subject to at least two neighborhood meetings and the review of the Urban Design Commission and the Newton Housing Partnership. A rezoning of the developable portions of the site will also need to be requested concurrent with the special permit request.

Site Sub-division

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- The portion of the parcel not used will remain under the ownership of the City for use as an expanded Playground/open space. The development team shall work with the City to define this area prior to filing for any special permits. The designated developer will be required to subdivide the developable portion of the parcel.

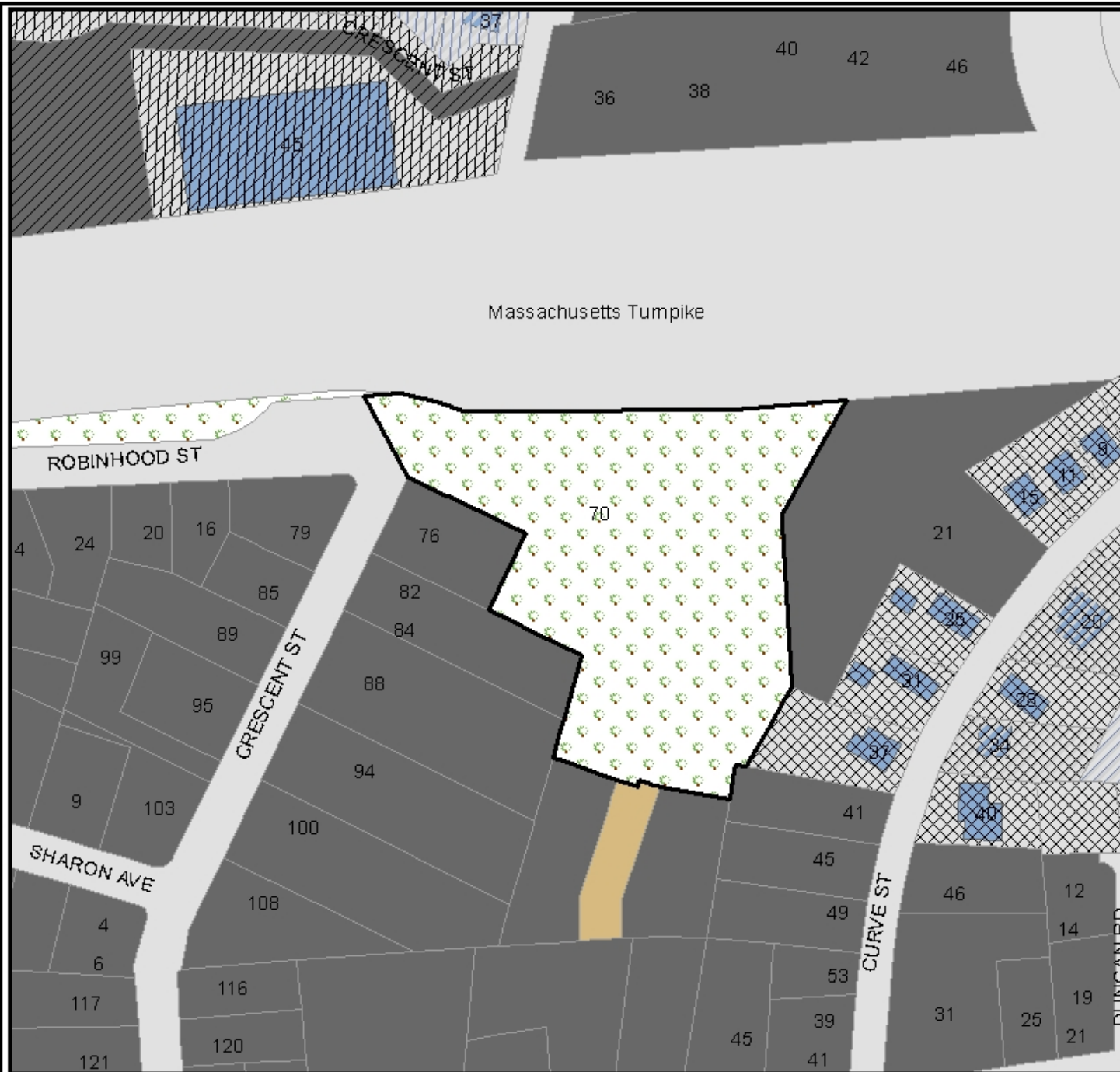
Zoning

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- The property is currently zoned Public Use
- Any development/reuse will require a re-zoning
- Multi-Residence 1 is likely to be the most appropriate zoning classification for the property
- Allowed uses in the Multi-Residence 1 zone include single and two-family dwellings
- Uses permitted by special permit include attached dwellings in one or more groups

70 Crescent St Zoning

*City of Newton,
Massachusetts*



Legend

- Single Residence 2
- Single Residence 3
- RMF-Residence 1
- RMF-Residence 2
- Business 2
- Public Use



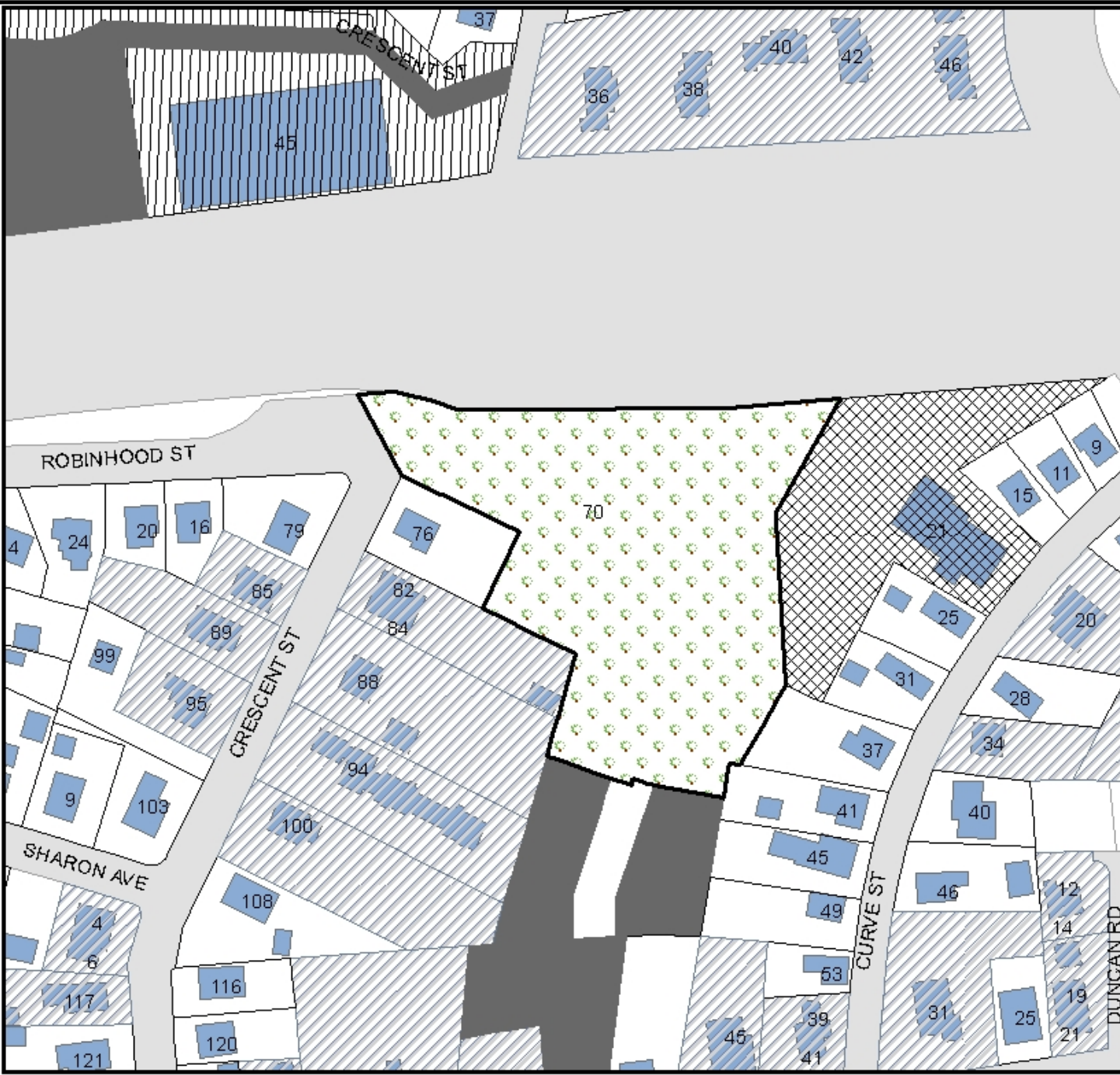
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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
 Mayor - Seth D. Warren
 GIS Administrator - Douglas Greenfield



70 Crescent St Land Use

*City of Newton,
Massachusetts*



Legend

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Open Space
- Nonprofit Organizations



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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
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Map Date: August 05, 2011

Responses

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- Responses are requested by 5PM on September 16, 2015.
- Responses should include a narrative description of your proposal and how it meets the City's vision for the site, conceptual site plan, your interest in the property for sale or for lease and proposed financial terms. Please make any assumptions known to the City in your response and include a pro-forma.
- 10 copies should be submitted to the Planning Department on the 2nd floor in Newton City Hall.
- Submissions will be reviewed by the Real Property Reuse Committee and some responders may be invited to present their vision for the property to the Committee.
- If the Committee and Executive Department decide to move forward an RFP is expected to be released within one year.

Studies Undertaken

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- In 2012 local citizen experts appointed to a Joint Advisory Planning Group studied the site and made recommendations for the highest and best use of the property. Their report, as well as a report from the City's Planning and Development Department can be found here:
 - <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/current/devrev/hip/crescent.asp>