

November 7, 2013

The Honorable Martin Walsh  
Mayor-elect, City of Boston  
Statehouse Room 527A  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: Improving Boston's Public Design Review Process**

Dear Mayor-elect Walsh,

On behalf of the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) I would like to congratulate you on your election as next Mayor. For those of us who live and work in Boston, it was gratifying to see your deep love for our City come through so clearly in your campaign. We applaud you for sharing your compelling vision of our city's values and potential.

In no small part, Boston is a great city because of design. Each individual building and every tree-lined street work together in harmony to make Boston beautiful, livable, and sustainable. Design also plays a critical role in our region's economy. Our architecture and design community is at the center of the state's "creative economy" driving job creation and contributing to our quality of life. With our advocacy work and many civic initiatives the BSA is well-positioned to help your administration address such urgent needs as housing affordability, climate change adaptation, job creation, transportation planning, and building better neighborhoods.

To that end, we would be honored to work with you and your team to streamline and improve the City's public design review process. We know the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Article 80 from both sides of the table. Five of our members (myself included) serve on the Boston Civic Design Commission. Many of our members have first-hand experience with major project design review in Boston as well as other cities across the country. We have practical recommendations on how design review can help strengthen communities, bring neighbors together, and protect the quality of our shared public realm without becoming an impediment to development and growth.

We ask your transition team to consider the following:

1. We can help you make the Article 80 design review a more efficient and impactful process, ensuring that everyone has a voice, and to reform the BRA in order to improve the quality of design and the benefits of economic development.
2. We recommend you include a BSA member architect on your transition team. As much as developers, builders and union representatives, architects have been active participants in the BRA's current review process. Our members can add a unique and complimentary perspective to the question of how to further develop an already thriving, beautiful city.

3. We ask you to look closely at how thoughtful planning, community engagement, economic development AND design review have recently combined to produce successful projects in places like Ashmont Square and outer Boylston Street in the Fenway. These growth areas provide important lessons about what is working and, just as importantly, what needs reforming.

We are eager to meet and help implement changes making Boston a model of livability, sustainability, economic vitality, health and beauty. We will be in touch with your transition leadership to set up a meeting, but in the meantime – congratulations again! We are excited to work with you to build a stronger Boston.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Davis FAIA  
President

PS. We would be very pleased to have you to join us at ABX, November 19 through 21, the largest regional design and construction convention in the country. Here you can see the creativity, intellectual power and vitality that makes Boston the leading design city in the country. We welcome the opportunity for you to share your thoughts on building a better Boston with our audience.



Ashmont TOD Residence  
Designed by The Architectural Team  
Photo by RWS



Fenway Triangle Project  
Architect & Rendering by Elkus Manfredi