

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR DURKAN



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE BOSTON CITY COUNCIL'S SUPPORT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS' SHADOW LAWS AS AFFIRMED BY SESSION LAW

WHEREAS, The Boston Common, Public Garden, and Copley Square Park are historic, iconic, and much-loved public open spaces in the City of Boston that provide critical green space, cultural value, and natural light for residents and visitors alike; *and*

WHEREAS, Access to sunlight and the preservation of open spaces are essential for environmental sustainability, public health, civic enjoyment, and equitable access to nature in urban environments; *and*

WHEREAS, The Massachusetts General Court enacted Chapter 362 of the Acts of 1990, Chapter 384 of the Acts of 1993, and Chapter 57 of the Acts of 2017 (collectively known as the "State Shadow Laws") to protect these public spaces from excessive and harmful shadow impacts caused by new building development; *and*

WHEREAS, Passed after years of advocacy by residents, civic organizations, and elected leaders committed to the stewardship of Boston's historic green spaces, these laws prohibit or restrict the casting of new shadows from development on the Boston Common, Public Garden, and Copley Square Park during specified times; *and*

WHEREAS, The 2017 update to the State Shadow Laws reinforced these protections while balancing the need for sustainable economic growth in the City of Boston by allowing limited, clearly defined exceptions and called for a broader planning initiative to examine growth, livability, and sunlight access in Boston's downtown neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS, These protections place unambiguous restrictions on additional shadow casted by new development upon these public spaces, allowing for minimal cast shadow only in tightly defined time periods under narrow exceptions, and remain essential tools to ensure that any growth in the downtown core do not come at the expense of public access to light and open space; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council hereby declares its unwavering support of the Commonwealth's Shadow Laws and that the integrity of these protections must be upheld by all levels of government.

Filed on: June 23, 2025