



City of Boston, Massachusetts  
Office of the Mayor  
**MICHELLE WU**

April 11, 2022

## TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I transmit herewith for your approval a home rule petition to the General Court entitled "Petition for a Special Law Re: An Act Relative to Creation of a Branch of the Boston Public Library (BPL) within an Affordable Housing Development at Parcel R-1 in the South Cove Urban Renewal Area in the Chinatown Section of the City of Boston."

Through this Act, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, d/b/a The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) seeks to ground lease BPDA-owned vacant land located at Parcel R-1 to a developer selected through a Request for Proposal who will participate in a redevelopment of Parcel R-1 using state and federal funds to fund the development of affordable housing. This project will also create a shell and core space within it that would be conveyed to the Boston Public Library (BPL) at cost, to allow BPL to build out the space as the long-awaited Chinatown branch library. Given extremely limited buildable land in Chinatown, creating the branch library within a larger affordable housing development is a way to achieve two much-needed public purposes within one development. To cover the cost of constructing a library within a non-profit development, this redevelopment necessitates certain exemptions from the Commonwealth's contract procurement and award laws. Although there have been reforms to the state statutes regarding filed sub-bids under Ch. 149, the changes are insufficient to allow for the selected developer to move forward in a redevelopment effort of this kind. Without passage of this Act, the project must adhere to an extremely structured filed sub-bid process, with separate General Contractor and subcontractor selection. These exemptions will not compromise a fair and transparent process because the BPDA's selected developer and the BPL must still adhere to the stringent regulations of its public funding sources. This model has been utilized successfully by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) which has filed similar legislation for rehabilitation of BHA housing across the city.

I urge your Honorable Body to support this special act so that we can make this redevelopment effort a reality for the Chinatown neighborhood and its people who need affordable housing options to remain in their neighborhood and who have also been waiting for a permanent Chinatown branch library for over two decades.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wu  
Mayor of Boston



**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

*WHEREAS,* The Boston Planning & Development Agency seeks to participate in a redevelopment to create affordable housing that includes shell and core space for a branch library in Chinatown. This redevelopment necessitates certain exemptions from the Commonwealth's contract procurement and award laws; and

*WHEREAS,* Participating in the redevelopment will increase the supply of affordable housing in the neighborhood, as well as provide space for a long-awaited branch library, furthering the aims of the Commonwealth's housing and community service initiatives; and

*WHEREAS,* The exemptions will not contravene the legislative intent behind the affected procurement and public contract laws because the additional regulation and public oversight that accompanies the Boston Public Library's funding sources minimizes the risk of unfair competition and misuse of taxpayer funds.

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,*

That a petition to the General Court, accompanied by a bill for a special law relating to the Boston Planning & Development Agency and the Boston Public Library to be filed with an attested copy of this order be, and hereby is, approved under Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article II, as amended, of the Articles of Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to the end that legislation be adopted precisely as follows, except for clerical or editorial changes of form only:

**PETITION FOR A SPECIAL LAW RE:**

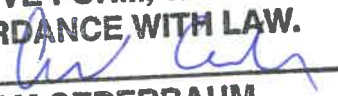
**AN ACT RELATIVE TO CERTAIN AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND BRANCH LIBRARY SPACE IN THE CHINATOWN SECTION OF THE CITY OF BOSTON**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**SECTION 1.** Construction and development activity related to redevelopment by the developer selected by the Boston Planning & Development Agency of subsidized affordable housing, which will also include space for a branch library to be procured by the Boston Public Library, to be built on BPDA-owned land under a ground lease, or any part thereof, shall not be subject to any general or special law related to the procurement and award of contracts for the planning, design, construction management, construction, reconstruction, installation, demolition, maintenance, or repair of buildings by a public agency, but shall be subject to sections 26 to 27H, inclusive, of chapter 149 of the General Laws.

**SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect upon its passage.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY  
THE FORGOING, IF PASSED IN  
THE ABOVE FORM, WILL BE IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH LAW.**  
BY   
**ADAM CEDERBAUM  
CORPORATION COUNSEL**