



# BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on City Services and Innovation Technology  
Kenzie Bok, Chair

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## REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

February 11, 2022

Dear Councilors:

***Docket #0223, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program, awarded by the Massachusetts Office on Disability to be administered by the Commission for Person with Disabilities. The grant will fund the installation of a vertical lift to the third floor mezzanine,*** was sponsored by the Administration, and referred to the Committee on February 2, 2022. The Committee held a public hearing on February 10, 2022.

### **Summary of Legislation:**

If approved, Docket #0223 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in the form of a grant, FY22 Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program, awarded by the Massachusetts Office on Disability, to be administered by the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. The grant would fund the installation of a vertical lift to the third floor mezzanine in Boston City Hall.

### **Information Gathered at the Hearing:**

Commissioner Kristen McCosh of the City of Boston's Commission for Persons with Disabilities; Kerrie Griffin, Director of the Public Facilities Department; and Joseph Cornish, Director of Design Review at the Boston Landmarks Commission, testified at the hearing on behalf of the Administration.

Commissioner McCosh stated that with this grant, the City of Boston will decommission and remove an old, existing stair lift which will provide access to the mezzanine level in the main lobby of Boston City Hall for numerous people. This project builds on several renovations the City of Boston has recently completed to improve accessibility of public spaces in City Hall. The Public Facilities Department will be able to incorporate the mezzanine lift project seamlessly into the elevator replacement project currently in progress. Upgrading access to the mezzanine will fix a critical missing link in accessibility at Boston City Hall for people with disabilities and other groups of people.

Commissioner McCosh discussed the current status of the City Hall mezzanine stating that currently the only way that people who use wheelchairs can get to the mezzanine is by using an inclined stair lift. This type of lift has a platform that accommodates one wheelchair, and it

carries the person in the wheelchair up along the staircase railing to the top of the mezzanine, moving very slowly. When it reaches the top, a loud beeping sound is triggered, calling unnecessary attention to the person on the lift. The existing lift is designed only to accommodate wheelchairs. The platform doesn't have a seat, and it is open on three sides, so people who have other types of mobility impairments, balance issues, are older adults, or have children in strollers are not able to use it. Additionally, the inclined lift is complicated to use and frequently breaks down.

Commissioner McCosh explained that the Massachusetts Office on Disability began a grant program in 2017 that offers municipal entities up to \$250,000 in funding to make accessibility improvements. The Disabilities Commission had applied for this grant twice before - once for a wayfinding project in City Hall, and once for the mezzanine accessibility project. The City's first two proposals were not approved, but in December 2021 the resubmission of the mezzanine accessibility project was approved.

The grant only covers costs incurred during Fiscal Year 2022, meaning the project must be completed by June 30th in order to make the most of the grant. This grant covers the purchase of materials and construction costs but does not cover design costs or staff salaries.

**Recommended Action:**

The Chair of the Committee on City Services and Innovation Technology, to which the following was referred:

***Docket #0223, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program, awarded by the Massachusetts Office on Disability to be administered by the Commission for Person with Disabilities***

submits a report recommending that this docket **ought to pass**.



Kenzie Bok, Chair  
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