

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS EDWARD M. FLYNN, COLETTA ZAPATA, CULPEPPER, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

AN ORDER REGARDING A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE BOSTON ZONING CODE RELATIVE TO REQUIRING ON-SITE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN PLAN: DOWNTOWN

WHEREAS, PLAN: Downtown, the first major planning effort in Downtown Boston since 1989, reportedly aimed to bring stakeholders together in partnership with the Boston Planning Department to craft a master plan for the neighborhood. Thanks to collaboration with the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group, the Planning Department adopted a carefully crafted masterplan in December 2023. However, in January 2025, the Planning Department introduced a draft plan that was a drastic shift from the previous December 2023 draft; *and*

WHEREAS, Despite years of community engagement and compromise with the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group from the start of the process in 2018, the BPDA Board subsequently approved a PLAN with negative feedback from the community in September 2025, and the Boston Zoning Commission approved the PLAN in October 2025. The PLAN is now codified in the Boston Zoning Code; *and*

WHEREAS, Residents have continued to be concerned about the potential violation with the state’s shadow law, loss of historic character and excessive height, including up to 500 to 700 feet in the so-called SKY DISTRICT, which includes zones with historic buildings; *and*

WHEREAS, A key area residents have highlighted is significant concerns on only building wealth storage units, as the plan failed to require on-site affordable housing. Requiring on-site affordable units would not only address some of the concerns on those wealth storage units that fail to address our housing crisis, it would provide access to the workforce, middle market and income-restricted units that working families so desperately need. While wealth storage units would not provide much-needed foot traffic the core of the city, on-site affordable housing would provide the consistent support that our small business community has lacked since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March of 2020; *and*

WHEREAS, A Boston Globe report also cited that Boston lagged 16 peer cities in housing production in 2024. With reports continuing to show that production has dropped significantly - from 9,800 in 2020, to 2,389 in 2024, and just 852 in the first half

of 2025 - all options should now be on the table to increase supply and meet demand for housing and affordable units; *and*

WHEREAS, During this time of great economic uncertainty - a high interest rate environment for years to stem post-pandemic inflation, increased construction costs, and now tariffs - we must use all tools available to build more housing and affordable housing in Boston, especially to generate more foot traffic to the core of the city in Downtown Boston; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED, *That the Boston City Council, by and through Councilor Edward Flynn, submits a petition to amend the text of the Boston Zoning Code.*

TO THE ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BOSTON:

Boston City Council through and by Boston City Councilor Edward Flynn petition to amend the text of the Boston Zoning Code as follows:

(1) The following section shall be inserted under Article 31, Section 6, clause A.

e. Requirement of On-site Affordable Units. A development plan must include a percentage of units be reserved as income-restricted, in accordance with the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), onsite.

Petitioner: Boston City Council

By: Councilor Edward Flynn

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